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METRICAL

LEGENDS

OF

Northumberland:

CONTAINING THE

TRADITIONS OF DUNSTANBOROUGH CASTLE,

And other Poetical Romances.

WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

By JAMES SERVICE.

"Ah! happy he who thus, in magic themes,
"O'er worlds bewitch'd in early rapture dreams;
"Where wild enchantment waves her potent wand,
"And Fancy's beauties fill her fairy land."

CRABBE.

ALNWICK:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY W. DAVISON.
TO BE HAD OF ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1834.

events either unnoticed or but slightly sketched by the older chroniclers; to revive a taste for the provincial poetry of our local legends; and to rescue from oblivion some of the traditionary and venerable associations of our father-land;—for

> "Time hath a wallet at his back,
> Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,
> A great-sized monster of ingratitude."

The Editor has attempted to make a nosegay of a few of the poetic flowers that Fancy has strewed in the romantic land of Northumbria; and, though he has brought "little of his own but the thread that ties them," he entertains a confident hope that these "Legends of Northumberland" will be received with indulgence.

J. S.

Chatton, March, 1834.

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SIR GUY, THE SEEKER;

A LEGENDARY TALE.

BY M. G. LEWIS.

INSCRIBED TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL GREY.

"Io son l'Occasione, a pochi nota.
Dietro del capo ogni capel m'e tolto,
Onde in van s'affatica un, se gli avviene,
Ch' io l'abbia trapassato, o' s'io mi volto.—
—Dimmi; chi e' colei, che teco viene?—
—"E' Penitenza! e pero, nota e intende,
Chi non sa prender me, costei ritiene."—

MACHIAVEL.

Sir Guy, the Seeker,

Is founded upon a tradition current in Northumberland.—Indeed, an adventure nearly similar to Sir Guy's, is said to have taken place in various parts of Great Britain, particularly on the Pentland Hills in Scotland, (where the prisoners are supposed to be King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table), and in Lancashire, where an ale-house near Chorley still exhibits the sign of a Sir John Stanley following an old man with a torch, while his horse starts back in terror at the objects, which are discovered through two immense iron gates —the ale-house is known by the name of the "Iron Gates," which are supposed to protect the entrance of an enchanted cavern in the neighbourhood. The female captive, I believe, is peculiar to Dunstanborough Castle; and certain shining stones, which are occasionally found in its neighbourhood, and which are called "Dunstanborough Diamonds," are supposed, by the peasants, to form part of that immense treasure, with which the Lady will reward her Deliverer.—In Wallis's "History of the Antiquities of Northumberland," the castle is described as follows:—"It stands on an eminence of several acres, sloping gently to the sea, and on the north and north-west edged with precipices in the form of a crescent: by the western termination of which are three natural stone pyramids of a considerable height, and by the eastern one an opening in the rocks made by the sea, under a frightful precipice, called Rumble Churn, from the breaking of the waves in tempestuous weather and high seas. Above this is the main entrance, and by it the ruin of the chapel: at the south-west corner is the draw-well, partly filled up. It is built with rag and whinstone."

This Romance was written during my residence in the castle's neighbourhood at Howick, the seat of the present Earl Grey; to whose ancestor, Sir William Grey, Dunstanborough Castle was granted by James the First. It is now the property of the Earl of Tankerville.

SIR GUY, THE SEEKER.

Like those in the head of a man just dead
Are his eyes, and his beard's like snow;
But when here he came, his glance was a flame,
And his locks seemed the plumes of the crow.

Since then are o'er forty summers and more;
Yet he still near the castle remains,
And pines for a sight of that lady bright,
Who wears the wizard's chains.

Nor sun nor snow from the ruins to go
Can force that aged wight;
And still the pile, hall, chapel, and aisle,
He searches day and night:

But find can he ne'er the winding stair,
Which he past that beauty to see,
Whom spells enthral in the haunted hall,
Where none but *once* may be.

That once regret will not let him forget!—
'Twas night, and pelting showers
Did patter and splash, when the lightning's flash
Showed Dunstanburgh's grey towers.

Raised high on a mound that castle frowned
In ruined pagean-trie;
And where to the north did rocks jut forth,
Its towers hung o'er the sea.

Proud they stood, and darkened the flood;
For the cliffs were so rugged and steep,
Had a plummet been dropt from their summit, unstopped
That plummet had reached the deep.

Nor flower there grew; nor tree e'er drew
Its nurture from that ground,
Save a lonely yew, whose branches threw
Their baleful shade around.

Loud was the roar on that sounding shore;
Yet still could the Knight discern,
Louder than all, the swell and the fall
Of the bellowing Rumble Churn!

With strange turmoil did it bubble and boil,
And echo from place to place;
So strong was its dash, and so high did it splash,
That it washed the castle's base:

The spray, as it broke, appeared like smoke
From a sea-volcano pouring;
And still did it rumble, and grumble, and tumble,
Rioting! raging! roaring!

Up the hill Sir Guy made his courser fly,
And hoped, from the wind and the rain,
That he there should find some refuge kind,
But he sought it long in vain:

For fast and hard each portal was barred,
And against his efforts proof;
Till at length he espied a porch spread wide
The shelter of its roof.

—"Gramercy, St. George!" quoth glad Sir Guy,
And sought the porch with speed;
And fast to the yew, which near it grew,
He bound his Barbary steed.

And safety found on that sheltered ground
From the sky's increasing gloom,
From his brow he took his casque, and he shook
The rain off, that burthened its plume.

Then long he stood in mournful mood,
With listless sullen air,
Propped on his lance, and with indolent glance
Watched the red lightning's glare;

And sadly listened to the shower,
  On the clattering roof that fell;
And counted twice the lonely hour,
  Tolled by some distant bell.

But scarce that bell could midnight tell,
  When louder roared the thunder,
And the bolt so red whizzed by his head,
  And burst the gates asunder.

And, lo! through the dark a glimmering spark
  He espied of lurid-blue;
Onward it came, and a form all flame
  Soon struck his wondering view!

'Twas an ancient man of visage wan,
  Gigantic was his height;
And his breast below there was seen to flow
  A beard of grizzled white:

And flames o'er-spread his hairless head,
  And down his beard they streamed;
And in his hand a radiant wand
  Of burning iron gleamed.

Of darkest grain, with flowing train,
  A wondrous robe he wore,
With many a charm to work man's harm
  In fire embroidered o'er;

And this robe was bound his waist around
With a triple chain red-hot!—
And still came nigher that phantom of fire,
Till he reached the self-same spot;

Where stood Sir Guy, while his hair bristled high,
And his breath he scarce could draw;
And he crost his breast, for, I wot, he guess'd,
'Twas Belzebub's self that he saw!

And full on the Knight that ghastly wight
Fixt his green and glassy eyes;
And he clanked his chain, and he howled with pain,
Ere his words were heard to rise.

—"Sir Knight, Sir Knight! if your heart be right,
And your nerves be firm and true,
Sir Knight, Sir Knight! a Beauty bright
In durance waits for you.

"But, Sir Knight, Sir Knight! if you ever knew fright,
That Dame forbear to view;
Or, Sir Knight, Sir Knight! that you feasted your sight,
While you live, you'll sorely rue!"—

—"That mortal ne'er drew vital air,
Who witnessed fear in me:
Come what come will, come good, come ill,
Lead on! I'll follow thee!"—

And now they go both high and low,
Above and under ground,
And in and out, and about and about,
And round, and round, and round!

The storm is hushed, and lets them hear
The Howlet's boding screech,
As now through many a passage drear
A winding stair they reach.

With beckoning hand, which flamed like a brand,
Still on the Wizard led;
And well could Sir Guy hear a sob and a sigh,
As up the first flight he sped!

While the second he past with footsteps fast,
He heard a death-bell toll!
While he climbed the third, a whisper he heard,
—"God's mercy on thy soul!"—

And now at the top the wanderers stop
A brazen gate before,
Of massive make; and a living snake
Was the bolt, which held the door.

In many a fold round the staple 'twas rolled;
With venom its jaws ran o'er;
And that juice of hell, wherever it fell,
To a cinder burned the floor.

When the monster beheld Sir Guy, he swelled
With fury, and threw out his sting;
Sparks flashed from each eye, and he reared him on high,
And prepared on the warrior to spring;

But the wizard's hand extended his wand,
And the reptile drooped his crest,
Yet strove to bite in impotent spite
The ground, which gave him rest!

And now the gate is heard to grate,
On its hinges turning slow;
Till on either side the valves yawn wide,
And in the wanderers go.

'Twas a spacious hall, whose sides were all
With sable hangings dight;
And whose echoing floor was diamonded o'er
With marble black and white;

And of marble black as the raven's back
A hundred steeds stood round;
And of marble white by each a knight
Lay sleeping on the ground;

And a hundred shafts of laboured bronze
The fretted roof upheld;
And the ponderous gloom of that vaulted room
A hundred lights dispelled;

And a dead man's arm by a magic charm
Each glimmering taper bore,
And where it was lopt, still dropt and dropt
Thick gouts of clotted gore.

Where ends the room, doth a crystal tomb
Its towering front uphold;
And on each hand two skeletons stand,
Which belonged to two giants of old:

That on the right holds a falchion bright,
That on the left a horn;
And crowns of jet with jewels beset
Their eyeless skulls adorn:

And both those grim colossal kings
With fingers long and lean
Point tow'rds the tomb, within whose womb
A captive Dame is seen.

A form more fair than that prisoner's, ne'er
Since the days of Eve was known;
Every glance, that flew from her eyes of blue,
Was worth an emperor's throne,
And one sweet kiss from her roseate lips
Would have melted a bosom of stone.

Soon as Sir Guy had met her eye,
Knelt low that captive maid;
And her lips of love seemed fast to move,
But he heard not what she said.

Then her hands did she join in suppliant sign,
Her hands more white than snow;
And like dews that streak the rose's cheek,
Her tears began to flow.

The warrior felt his stout heart melt,
When he saw those fountains run:
—"Oh! what can I do," he cried, "for you?
What mortal can do, shall be done!"—

Then out and speaks the wizard;
Hollow his accents fall!
—"Was never man, since the world began,
Could burst that crystal wall:

"For the hand, which raised its magic frame,
Had oft clasped Satan's own;
And the lid bears a name.....Young Knight,
the same
Is stamped on Satan's throne;

"At its maker's birth long trembled the earth;
The skies dropt showers of gore;
And she, who to light gave the wondrous wight,
Had died seven years before;

"And at Satan's right hand while keeping his stand,
The foulest Fiend of fire
Shrunk back with awe, when the babe he saw,
For it shocked its very sire!

"But hark, Sir Knight! and riddle aright
The riddle I'll riddle to thee;
Thou'lt learn a way without delay
To set yon damsel free.

"See'st yonder sword, with jewels rare
Its dudgeon crusted o'er?
See'st yonder horn of ivory fair?
'Twas Merlin's horn of yore!

"That horn to sound, or sword to draw,
Now, youth, your choice explain;
But that which you choose, beware how you lose,
For you never will find it again;

"And that once lost, all hopes are crost,
Which now you fondly form;
And that once gone, the sun ne'er shone
A sadder wight to warm;

"But such keen woe, as never can know
Oblivion's balmy power,
With fixed despair your soul will share,
Till comes your dying hour.

"Your choice now make for yon Beauty's sake;
To burst her bonds endeavour;
But that which you choose, beware how you lose;
Once lost, 'tis lost for ever!"—

In pensive mood awhile now stood
Sir Guy, and gazed around;
Now he turned his sight to the left, to the right,
Now he fixed it on the ground.

Now the falchion's blaze attracted his gaze;
On the hilt his fingers lay;
But he heard fear cry,—"you're wrong, Sir Guy!"
And he snatched his hand away!

Now his steps he addrest tow'rds the North and the West;
Now he turned tow'rds the East and the South;
Till with desperate thought the horn he caught,
And prest it to his mouth.

Hark! the blast is a blast so strong and so shrill,
That the vaults like thunder ring;
And each marble horse stamps the floor with force,
And from sleep the warriors spring!

And frightful stares each stony eye,
As now with ponderous tread
They rush on Sir Guy, poising on high
Their spears to strike him dead.

At this strange attack full swift sprang back,
I wot, the startled Knight!
Away he threw the horn, and drew
His falchion keen and bright.

But soon as the horn his grasp forsook,
Was heard a cry of grief;
It seemed the yell of a soul in hell
Made desperate of relief!

And straight each light was extinguished quite,
Save the flame so lurid-blue
On the Wizard's brow, (whose flashings now
Assumed a bloody hue),
And those sparks of fire, which grief and ire
From his glaring eye-balls drew!

And he stamped in rage, and he laughed in scorn,
While in thundering tone he roared,
"Now shame on the coward who sounded a horn,
When he might have unsheathed a sword!"

He said, and from his mouth there came
A vapour blue and dank,
Whose poisonous breath seemed the kiss of death,
For the Warrior senseless sank.

Morning breaks! again he wakes;
Lo! in the porch he lies,
And still in his heart he feels the dart,
Which shot from the captive's eyes.

From the ground he springs! as if he had wings,
The ruin he wanders o'er,

And with prying look each cranny and nook
His anxious eyes explore;

But find can he ne'er the winding stair,
Which he climbed that Dame to see,
Whom spells enthral in the haunted hall,
Where none but once may be.

The earliest ray of dawning day
Beholds his search begun;
The evening star ascends her car,
Nor yet his search is done;

Whence the neighbours all the Knight now call
By "Guy, the Seeker's" name;
For never he knows one hour's repose
From his wish to find the Dame;

But still he seeks, and aye he seeks,
And seeks, and seeks in vain;
And still he repeats to all he meets,
—"Could I find the sword *again!*"—

Which words he follows with a groan,
As if his heart would break;
And, oh! that groan has so strange a tone,
It makes all hearers quake!

The villagers round know well its sound,
And when they hear it poured,

—"Hark! hark!" they cry; "the Seeker Guy
Groans for the Wizard's sword."—

Twice twenty springs on their fragrant wings
For his wound have brought no balm;
For still he's found. . . . But, hark! what sound
Disturbs the midnight calm?

Good peasants, tell, why rings that knell?
—"'Tis the Seeker-Guy's we toll:
"His race is run; his search is done."——
God's mercy on his soul!

THE SEEKER.

BY A. B.

AURI SACRA FAMES.—VIRG.

A TALE of enchantment, under the title of "*Sir Guy, the Seeker,*" was published by M. G. Lewis, Esq., in his *Romantic Legends:* that it was miscalled a *Northumbrian Tradition* is too evident to need a formal proof—

> "The child is genuine, you may trace
> "Throughout the sire's transmitted face."

On such subjects *Lewis stood alone;* and, notwithstanding his wild luxuriance of imagination, his mastery over interest and horror, and even his genuine poetry, I believe there are few who envy the distinction he has deservedly obtained. As to the tale, its origin is humbly offered in the following sketch. The incident of the *horn and sword* is borrowed from the tradition of *Shewin' Shiels,* near Hexham. As the ship, in the following story, proceeds, the author endeavours to describe the various beauties and some of the *memorabilia* of the coast.

> "There's a heap of fuilish tales about the auld castle."
> "Ay, but Mally, this is true, nowna!"
>
> DUNSTAN DIALOGUES.

THE SEEKER.

'Twas sunset, and the crimson sky,
Deceptive to the peasant's eye—
(Strange, ills the hues of hope will borrow!)—
Spoke a calm eve, a cheerful morrow.
But to the seaman's practis'd ear
The dying west wind whisper'd fear!
And in the gathering rack he sees
The drear forerunner of the breeze;—
The timbers frail, a foreign crew,
The squall astern, the coast in view—
The helm became the master's care;
A sullen stillness in the air,
A hollow murmur on the wave,
The fearful chill'd, appall'd the brave—
Save one—a stranger to affright.
His country open'd on his sight,
With all the blissful thoughts it brings;
And Rupert scorn'd the power of kings---
For round him sat his babes and wife,
And he had spent an exile's life

In realms where fortune and the sun
With equal heat on Rupert shone.
Nor had he brought of eastern climes
The gold alone—but India's crimes.
Avarice, that digs his brother's heart
For gain—the oily tongue of art—
Debauch, in swinish riot drown'd—
The groveling eye that seeks the ground,
And dares not brook the look from high—
The frown which slaves in terror fly—
The heart of stone—the furrow'd brow—
The darkling stab—the broken vow.
Loves he his wife? I cannot tell;
He bought her, and again would sell.
His children? While they feed his pride,
While they sit smiling by his side.
Yes, in this hour his callous heart,
Long sear'd, is soften'd. What is art?
Can aught the soul with joy inspire
Like one bright "spark of Nature's fire?"
"The land, the land! Ye sluggard gales,
Blow fresh, and fill our flapping sails!
Ah! who has known, till doom'd to roam,
How sweet the breeze that breathes of home?"
And now, beneath his eager eye,
Dëira and Bernicia lie.
There, in the breast of ocean, Tyne
And all his subject streams recline;
And many a human sacrifice
Propitiates their deities;

For dark and dangerous is the bar,
And like a banner in the war,
High lifted on its craggy spear,
The Priory glows in saffron here
To guide, inspire, direct, and save—
Its point the sky, its base the wave;
Meet emblem of the present hour,
For downwards where those shadows low'r,
The noisy and tumultuous past
Foams on the waves, howls in the blast,
While, overhead, the softest blue
Of heav'n cerulean meets the view.
And there is peace—the future shines,
Pictur'd in Hope's delusive lines,
Bright as the crimson clouds of even—
Isles of gold in the deep of heaven.
And now the coy retiring coast
Recedes in bays; or, 'gainst the host
Of wild waves, where no pilot steers,
Its wall of crags eternal rears.
There Hartley's moon of burning sand,
There the peninsulated land,
Whose jutty cape the sea derides,
While Blyth and Wansbeck lave its sides.
Fair sisters! on your devious way,
Together ye have sought to stray,
Each other's lovely parallel.
From Pont to Cambois who can tell
How many a deep entangled glade,
Green vale, and wild wood's grateful shade,

And castled crag, and hoary pile,
With fretted roof and cloister'd aisle?
Unequal'd, save by Hartford's vale,
And Bedlington's romantic dale!
There Warkworth's isle and antique towers
Provoke the pencil's vivid powers.
What can the pen?—may words avail—
Save his who told the hermit's tale?
There Aln—her pleasing travel o'er,
(Cheer'd with her murmuring song)—no more
Beholds a second Carmel soar
Her banks among. The ivied wall,
And vaulted roof, decaying fall;
Whence, solemn borne her stream along,
Once swell'd the lauds or vesper song.
The tints her clear broad waters* shew,
Now with a purer purple glow,
Than the ensanguin'd hue they wore
Oft in the vaunted days of yore.
To England's halls and peaceful bowers,
To Alnwick's lord and lofty towers,
A slaughter'd and a captive king,
Safety and honour well might bring,
And 'twas the foeman's boast to yield
To "moony crest and lion shield."
What now supplies lost warlike fame?
The love that follows Percy's name.

---

* As implied in the British name Aln or Awn.

There (Nature's fortress) on the base
Of column'd crags, whose verdant face
Unscaleable defies the land,
Even as they spurn the ocean, stand
The walls that boast St. Dunstan's name;
And there Northumbria's pride, where fame
In earliest ages dwelt. When Rome
(For peace abroad bred strife at home)
Sent her dread legions o'er the wave
To conquer worlds, and win—a grave;
Here soar'd her eagle standard—hence—
(As in one point the clouds condense
Ere the red bolt of Jove is hurl'd)—
They rush'd upon the northern world!
'Then revell'd here that trait'rous Queen,
Whose magic power and rites obscene
Bernicia, the fair virgin, held
In foul enchantment, undispell'd,
Till, from Germania's forests far,
A youth, by nature form'd for war,
In bark of roantree, magic proof,
And silken sail of wondrous woof,
Royally o'er the ocean bore,
And gain'd, unscath'd, Northumbria's shore.
The serpent foe of Spindleston
Defi'd, destroy'd, and bravely won
The ransom'd maid, his bright reward.'
In mystic strain the Cheviot bard
Thus sang the Pictish power o'erthrown,
Northumbria rescu'd, and the crown

By Saxon Ida nobly worn.
Since then no conqueror has been born
So great, to plant, 'mid hostile powers,
A foeman's flag on Bamburgh's towers!
Her walls, which Mercia fir'd in vain,
Repell'd the first invading Dane.
Is aught still wanting to her fame?
She foil'd the Douglas!—and her name
Invincible, and Phœnix form,
Fresh from the fire, strong from the storm,
March in a steady pace with time,
And each new age soar more sublime.
How weak her glories' brightest ray,
To the calm wreath she wears to-day!
Oh! could my verse give honour due
To generous deeds, exalted Crewe!
My ev'ry nerve's extatic strain,
My throbbing heart and thrilling vein,
And the expanding soul that tries
To burst its earthly bonds and rise
To catch one kindred spark from thine,
Should fire the energetic line,
And modulate the flowing verse,
Thy praise—thy actions to rehearse!
Meek Prelate! Pity by thy side,
And Charity thy gentle guide,
Where'er thou movest flees despair,
The good man's love, the poor man's pray'r,
On earth were thine---a foretaste giv'n,
That man may bear the joys of heav'n.

Let Envy taunt the churchman's pride,
Thy faith let scoffing foes deride,
Accept, though mean, the votive lay
That cheers the grateful wand'rer's way---
A tribute from the wand'rer's hand,
Wealth cannot buy, nor power command.

Such were not Rupert's thoughts, I wot,
The boast of Bamburgh then was not.
The sailor's blessing was his dread;
The rock seem'd on its sandy bed
A crocodile, huge, fierce, and black,
Heaving the ruins from his back.
And now the churning breakers' roar,
Warn'd them to shun the fatal shore;
The cloud had gather'd, and the storm
Had burst, in desolation's form:
The pitching vessel topp'd the wave,
Or, surging, plumb'd a yawning grave:
The flatted sail flapp'd round the mast
That groan'd before the howling blast,
Which whistled in the cordage shrill,
Mocking the boatswain's signal still.
The Ferns are near—with deaf'ning roar,
The surges lash'd the island shore,
And ever as the billows broke,
"The sea volcano pour'd its smoke," *

* The Rumble Churn.—LEWIS.

A foamy column, rising high,
Confounding ocean with the sky;
And, bounding from the dashing spray,
The sea-birds cleave their murky way,
In living clouds the skies deform,
Ride on the blast and woo the storm!
The sun had set in blood; and night
In thickest darkness reign'd.—'Tis light!
The clouds of heav'n like scrolls are furl'd,
A fearful glare illumes the world,
Revealing to the astonish'd crew
Horrors unknown and dangers new;
Now terror bars the doors of breath,
And opens every gate of death.
The gleam is but a moment's guest,
Night folds them in her sable vest,
And double darkness wraps the scene.
What may that scream of horror mean?
The dreadful blaze has burst again,
But not from op'ning heav'n—the main
Recoils—an awful pause—and last
A fearful crash!———The hollow blast
Has sung their requiem; and their grave
Is deep beneath the raging wave.

One soul alone escaped the wreck,
'Twas Rupert. On the vessel's deck
Unmoved he saw the tempest break,
The wild uproar, the piercing shriek,

And the deep groan unnoted, he
Look'd calmly on the foamy sea.
Not India's sun could e'er efface
The nerve of stern Northumbria's race.
Nor strange the scene before him now;
Not his the pray'r, the offer'd vow,
Pour'd to the saint of holy isle:—
The unbeliever's scornful smile
Play'd round his lip, and from his eye
The lightning shafts of anger fly.
"Men—are ye men?—my voice obey—
Let priests their creeds and aves say,
And those who cannot labour, pray;
Each to his post—the helm—the deck—
Ply the chok'd pumps, and clear the wreck!"
He urged in vain—and when the stroke
Electric on the vessel broke,
With one cold kiss his babes and wife
Consign'd to fate—with nought but life,
(Hopeless his dearer wealth to save)
He plunged into the boiling wave,
And grappling to a floating oar,
By the next wave was washed on shore.
His iron nerves sustained the shock—
He sprang uninjured from the rock.
As on he paced, each anxious tread
Disturbed the sea-fowl in her bed;
And screaming wild before him flew,
Gull, teal, and coot, and shrill curlew;

With duller flight and hoarser note,
The flapping cormorant strain'd her throat.
The isle—and Rupert sought it well—
No refuge offer'd, save one cell—
Dwelling of holy anchorite—
The lamp that gave our church's light;
Nor suits it with our grateful theme,
To burst the cloud that dimm'd its beam.
How many a strain of heavenly worth
To *superstition* owes its birth!
Suffice it, Rupert hail'd the ground
With joy where he a shelter found.
His rugged couch strew'd, and addrest
His drench'd and weary form to rest.
He dream'd. An odour fill'd the place—
A form of venerable grace,
Whose mien and heaven-commercing eye,
And—all that seem'd of earth—a sigh,
Claim'd mute attention.—Thus he spake:
"Rise, man of sin—Rupert, awake!
Long have thy crimes offended heaven—
Long hast thou scorn'd the mercy given—
Thy latest hour is drawing nigh—
Thine is the choice to live or die—
Thy wife and children wait for thee—
If thou wouldst join them, follow me!
I'll point thee out the narrow road
That leads, through pains, to them and God."
His speaking eye on Lindisfern
Rested, and Rupert might discern

In vision that the convent train
(To the far-swelling Complin's strain)
In high procession moved along,
And Rupert strove to join the throng,
But could not—for a heavy hand
Restrain'd him. Fancy's magic wand
Gave new creations birth—he turn'd,
And soon a stranger form discern'd.
Was it the Spirit of the Isles?
His wither'd face was purs'd in smiles—
His matted hair was green sea-weed,
Twined with the sand-bank's grassy seed—
His doublet warm of Eider down—
And seal-skin mantle backwards thrown—
Green trunks and hose of syrens' hair—
And round his neck a rosary rare
Of Cuthbert beads and native pearl,
That might have graced Northumbria's earl.
"Thy loss shall be restored with gain,
Thine be the treasures of the main,
Follow and fear not—take thou this,
'Twill lead thee on the way to bliss."
He said, and plunged into the deep,
And Rupert from disturbed sleep
Awoke. Within his startled ken,
Flitted the offspring of the fen,
The torch the spirit of the flood
Gave for his guide—it chill'd his blood!
Fear has oppress'd the boldest soul
That ere scorn'd God or man's controul,

As he who dares all law to brave,
Is often custom's meanest slave.
He was awake—it was no dream;
He saw it—and its fitful gleam
Moved onwards over rock and hill,
He following. Now, the night was still,
The moaning breeze repentant sighing
Mourn'd its rage,—the clouds were flying
Fast o'er the azure vault,—the sea
Still chafing swell'd, and you might see,
On wave and beach, on crag and scar,
Dread signs of elemental war.
At length he reach'd a shelter'd creek,
Where oft our fishers refuge seek;
It seem'd a place of rest—but soon
In mournful splendour burst the moon
From the thin clouds, and by her light
A drifted coble cheer'd his sight,
With mast and sail, and oars and—food.
His strength recruited, on the flood
He launch'd again, but wild amaze
And terror shone in Rupert's gaze,
When on the little vessel's prow
His paly guide was seated! Now,
It seems the lamp of hope—his mind
Was fill'd with wonders—while the wind
Blew fresh, and o'er the swelling sea
Light skimm'd the bark, and merrily
Away, away, and as they roam
In sparks of gold, and silver foam,

They tell the moon their course. 'Tis o'er,
They're landed on St. Dunstan's shore,
And springing from the spangled wave
He enters now a gloomy cave,
The wild fire leading still the way.
It sank—but now its feeble ray
Was needless—on th' astonish'd sight
Burst forth a broad and dazzling light;
A blaze "unborrowed of the sun."
The golden store that Cyrus won,
The spoils of mighty Babylon—
The wealth the heathen poets feign'd,
By Midas' talisman obtain'd—
The hoards of Crœsus—every gem,
In turban, vest, or diadem,
That shone in Xerxes' host, when he
Shook thy famed plain, Thermopylæ—
The riches to Aladdin shewn—
The pride of that Barbaric throne,
The sun of Afric, Ashantee—
The wondrous treasures of the sea—
These and all the golden streams
That Alchymists in feverish dreams
Have seen—together heap'd, and more
Were nought beside that cavern's store.
Sapphire with topaz rich inlaid,
Emerald with amethyst array'd,
In bright "mozaic wrought" the wall;
From the roof of jet depending fall

Inverted pinnacles of bright
Carbuncle, join'd with tracery light
Of diamond and of olivine,
As if the genius of the mine
Had hither called in elder time,
From every region, every clime,
His subject train, and each had brought
What of his realms was worthiest thought,
And first the swarthy power that sways
The rod of mineral Afric. Blaze
His altars now? The ancient world---
Proud Carthage to the dust is hurl'd,
And Ethiopia set in night,
And Egypt from her airy height
Is fallen—now his tributes cease
From blinded Rome and bleeding Greece.
High on the mountains of the moon,
He mourns his glories set at noon.
Then, from their yet unravag'd homes,
Peru and Quito's yellow Gnomes,
Heap'd those ingots, bars, and ore,
In masses on the rusty floor;
Where never mortal footstep trode
Till Rupert's—there Golconda's god
His light-embodying crystals pil'd;
And here the mighty genius smil'd
On hardier Europe's spar-crown'd king.
Wild fancy, tame thy soaring wing,
For who can paint the anxious gaze
With which pleas'd Rupert saw them blaze;

Or who conceive his anguish'd mind,
When, reader, *he was stricken blind!*
Th' attempt were vain—I will not try
To paint his sorrow's extasy,
The heart-wrung groan, the scalding tear,
The stiffen'd eye-ball strain'd and sear,
Half-utter'd pray'rs, which, dreadful, turn
To curses deep that mercy spurn.
But, though the orbs of light were quench'd,
Stern Rupert's spirit never blench'd.
He rose and darkling groped his way,
Once more to realms of upper day,
To Rupert equal now with night.
But though the dawning's russet light
To him was not—the breath of morn
Was keen—the fields where he was born,
The scene of all his youthful bliss,
The spot where first love's rapt'rous kiss
Hallow'd his lip, those cherish'd plains,
For which he hoarded all the gains
Of industry and prosp'rous crime,
With which he hop'd, in future time,
To be the lord of this domain,
And o'er his friends and kinsmen reign;
Those fields he trode a beggar, blind,
A man cut off from all his kind,
Tortur'd by conscience, not one friend
To lead him to his journey's end.
The peasants shunn'd the fearful wight,
"That traced the ruins day and night,"

And many a tale of wonder tell
Of him who sought the hidden cell,
And ne'er could find; for, it is said,
Seven dreary years pass'd o'er his head,
Then, on the eve of that dread night
When first he lost—the pale blue light
Again appeared and brought him sight,
Play'd on the edge and seem'd to sink;
Amaz'd flew Rupert to the brink,
The loosen'd rock on which he stood
Incumbent o'er the mining flood,
Crumbling gave way,—a smother'd sound,
A shuddering tremor felt around,
One struggle made to reach the shore,
One groan---he sank to rise no more.

How many a precious year is spent,
Peace sacrificed and dear content,
How many a spotless soul is stain'd,
In the vain search of what obtain'd
Cannot one hour of comfort buy,
Yet still men seek—and seeking die.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTE 1, P. 30, L. 25, &c.

And now, beneath his eager eye,
Dëira and Bernicia lie.

Selden represents the principalities of Dëira and Bernicia as earldoms given in perpetuity; of which the instances were not frequent during the Saxon period. The limit of Bernicia on the south is sometimes said by the ancient English writers to be the Tyne, and sometimes the Tees. In the same manner its northern limit is sometimes said to be the Frith of Forth, at other times the Tweed. It is probable that, at different periods of time, its actual limits did thus vary.

NOTE 2, P. 31, L. 3, &c.

High lifted on its craggy spear,
The Priory glows in saffron here.

Tynemouth Priory is situated on a peninsula formed of stupendous rocks, on the north side of the river Tyne, against which the heavy seas break with great vehemence and tumult. Waltheof, to shew some colour or pretext for the degradation of this monastery, pretended it was an unfit situation for devotion; which, observes Wallis, "is so far from being the case, that few can exceed it for presenting

the mind with a variety of solemn objects, capable of raising it to an adoration and awful reverence of the Deity. The very precipice it stands on, lofty and almost perpendicular, whose semicircular base withstands the fury of the waves, must have inspired the religious with a firm reliance on him who is the rock of ages: the calms—the storms—the ships—must all by turns have furnished them with occasions to praise him whose wonders are in the deep."

NOTE 3, P. 31, L. 21.

There Hartley's moon of burning sand.

Hartley is about five miles north from North Shields, and contains glass-houses for the manufacture of bottles, salt-works, and other manufactories.

NOTE 4, P. 31, L. 28.

From Pont to Cambois, &c.

Cambois is situated at the mouth of the river Wansbeck, and between seven and eight miles south by east from Morpeth. Cambois is a small port, belonging to Sir Matthew White Ridley, Bart., and its exports consist chiefly of corn, timber, and grindstones. The banks of the Wansbeck are beautifully clothed with wood, and there are some fine plantations at Sheepwash, above three miles west from Cambois.

NOTE 5, P. 32, L. 3.

Unequal'd, save by Hartford's vale.

Hartford House, erected by the late William Burdon, Esq., is delightfully situated at the southern extremity of Bedlingtonshire, on the beautiful and picturesque banks of the river Blyth.

NOTE 6, P. 32, L. 4.

And Bedlington's romantic dale.

Bedlington stands in a pleasant elevated situation, between four and five miles south-east from Morpeth. It consists principally of one long and wide street, forming a kind of sloping avenue to the river Blyth, which glides past it between two steep banks.

NOTE 7, P. 32, L. 5.

There Warkworth's isle and antique towers.

It is said by Bede, that Coquet Island was famous for the resort of monks in St. Cuthbert's time, and there was a cell here for the Benedictines subordinate to Tynemouth Priory.

Warkworth Castle was formerly of great note, being the residence of the Lords Percy, when wardens of the marches, and from it many an order was issued that let havoc loose on the Scottish border. Nor, at times, were the wardens themselves unmolested. One of the Earls of Northumberland, writing to the king and council, observed that he had dressed himself at midnight by the blaze of the neighbouring villages, fired by the Scotch marauders.

About a mile from the Castle, in a deep romantic valley, are the remains of a Hermitage, of which the chapel is still entire. It is very beautifully designed, and executed in the solid rock, and has all the decorations of a complete Gothic church or cathedral in miniature. Connected with this is the inimitable Tale of the Hermit of Warkworth, from the pen of Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, in 1771.

NOTE 8, P. 32, L. 10, &c.

——————— No more
Beholds a second Carmel near.

Hulne Abbey, the first monastery of Carmelite Friars in the kingdom, is about three miles distant from Alnwick, within the parks and pleasure grounds of His Grace the Duke of Northumberland. The interest of these monastic remains is greatly enhanced by the picturesque beauties and solemnity of the surrounding scenery. Seated on a sloping eminence, and embosomed in venerable groves, its ivyed ruins hang beautifully by the side of the river Aln, in a woody and delightful solitude. The account of its foundation is thus given by ancient writers. Among the English barons who went to the Holy Wars in the reign of Henry III. were William de Vesey, Lord of Alnwick, and Richard Grey, two eminent chieftains in the Christian army. Led by curiosity or devotion, they visited the monks of Mount Carmel, and there unexpectedly found a countryman of their own, named Ralph Fresborn, a Northumberland gentleman, who had signalized himself in a former crusade, and, in consequence of a vow, had taken upon himself the monastic profession in that solitude. When Vesey and Grey were about to return to England, they strongly importuned the superior of the Carmelites to permit their countryman to accompany them; which was at length granted, on condition that they would found a monastery for Carmelites in their own country. After they returned, Fresborn, mindful of their engagement, began to look out for a place for their convent; and, after examining all the circumjacent solitudes, he at length fixed upon

this spot, induced, it is said, by the great resemblance which the adjoining hill bore to Mount Carmel in Palestine.—*Vide Davison's History of Alnwick.*

NOTE 9, P. 32, L. 21, &c.

To Alnwick's lord and lofty towers,
A slaughter'd and a captive king,
Safety and honour well might bring.

During the reign of William Rufus, Malcolm III. of Scotland was treacherously slain by an English soldier on an eminence about a mile north of Alnwick. His son Edward, attempting to revenge his father's fate, was also slain, and the army defeated. In the year 1174, William, king of Scotland, surnamed the Lion, while besieging Alnwick Castle, being surprised by a party of Englishmen at a distance from his camp, was made prisoner, and afterwards ransomed for £100,000. In commemoration of these events, monuments have been erected with explanatory inscriptions.

NOTE 10, P. 32, L. 24, &c.

And 'twas the foeman's boast to yield
To "moony crest and lion shield."

The silver crescent or half-moon was granted as a badge to a Percy for having taken a Turkish standard in an expedition against the Saracens in the Holy Land. The silver crescent and a white lion salient were the ancient cognizances of that noble house, and are still used to this day.

"Then journeying to the Holy Land,
"There bravely fought and died;
"But first the silver crescent wan
"Some Paynim Soldan's pride."

NOTE 11, P. 33, L. 4, &c.

Ever as they spurn the ocean, stand
The walls that boast St. Dunstan's name.

See M. G. Lewis's prefatory remarks, p. 11, 12.

NOTE 12, P. 33, L. 7, &c.

——————————— When Rome
Sent her dread legions o'er the wave,
Here soar'd her eagle standard.

Bamburgh Castle is an ancient fortress, and the site on which it stands is supposed to have been one of the Castella built by Agricola. Others conjecture that Ida, king of the Bernicia, first fortified the rock, and erected the Castle of Bamburgh, and, in honour of his queen Bibba, gave it the name of *Bibbanburgh*, which, in progress of time, was contracted into its present name. It exhibits one of the most remarkable specimens of the primitive mode of defence which this country now contains. It was in the possession of Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland, when he raised the standard of rebellion against William II., when it was besieged and taken, with several partisans of that noble traitor.

NOTE 13, P. 33, L. 15.

Then revell'd here that trait'rous Queen.

See the note to the "Laidley Worm."

NOTE 14, P. 34, L. 5.

Her walls, which Mercia fir'd in vain.

Penda, an ambitious prince, after his victory in Yorkshire, ravaged all Northumberland, and penetrated as far as the royal residence of Bamburgh.

Having in vain attempted to reduce this strong place by a siege, he collected a great quantity of wood and other combustibles, from the ruins of villages destroyed in the neighbourhood, of which he made a vast pile near the walls; and setting fire to it at a time when the wind favoured his design, he attempted to burn the place. But the wind, suddenly changing, drove the flames upon the besiegers, scorching some and terrifying all; after which they immediately abandoned their enterprise. This deliverance was ascribed to the prayers of Aidan, bishop of Lindisfern, who, for the sake of a more retired devotion, sojourned at that time, as he was often wont, in one of the Fern Islands.

NOTE 15, P. 34, L. 8.

She foil'd the Douglas!———

Previously to the battle of Halidon Hill in 1333, when Edward III. besieged Berwick, Lord Douglas, instead of attacking the English army, crossed the Tweed, and in sight of the town marched along the coast towards the castle of Bamburgh, which, being esteemed impregnable, was chosen by the king of England as a secure residence for his queen Philippa. The Scottish army consumed some days in blocking up that fortress, and in ravaging the adjacent parts of Northumberland, hoping that Edward's solicitude for his queen, and desire to hinder the destruction of a very fertile spot of his kingdom, would make him abandon the siege of Berwick.

NOTE 16, P. 34, L. 15, &c.

Oh! could my verse give honour due
To generous deeds, exalted Crewe!

"Si monumentum videas, circumspice."

Bamburgh Castle continued in the hands of the crown till the reign of James I., who granted it to John Forster, Esq. Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, of Stene, in Northamptonshire, and Bishop of Durham, having married Dorothy, daughter of Sir William Forster, of Bamburgh, purchased this estate, which in 1720 his lordship devised to trustees for various munificent and charitable purposes. The sunken rocks and shifting sands of this coast had been a terror to the mariner for ages; but, under his lordship's will, Dr. Sharp, then Archdeacon of Durham, fitted up the Keep of the Castle, a fabric of vast strength and magnitude, for the reception of suffering seamen, and of property which might be rescued from the fury of the deep. Regulations were also adopted, both to prevent accidents on the coast, and to alleviate misfortunes when they had occurred. A nine-pounder, placed at the bottom of the great tower, gives signals to ships in distress, and in case of a wreck, announces the same to the Custom-House officers and their servants, who hasten to prevent the wreck being plundered. In addition to which, during a storm, horsemen patrol the coast, and rewards are paid for the earliest intelligence of vessels in distress. A flag is always hoisted when any ship is seen in distress on the Fern Islands, or Staples; or a rocket thrown up at night, which gives notice to the Holy Island fishermen, who can put off to the spot when no boat from the main land can get over the breakers. Life-boats have been added to the establishment:

"And pity, at the dark and stormy hour
Of midnight, when the moon is hid on high,
Keeps her lone watch upon the topmost tower,
And turns her ear to each expiring cry."

A boundless view of the ocean presents itself to the east from Bamburgh Castle, spotted with small islands, having Coquet Island on the south, and Holy Island on the north.

NOTE 17, P. 35, L. 23.

The Ferns are near.

The Fern Islands form two groups to the number of seventeen, and are said in a popular legend to be "as void of men as full of devils." They excite fearful and singular interest, being remarkable for the dangers they occasion to seamen, and, as Owen observes, "the deadly doctrine they preach to their winter audience." The largest is memorable from being the situation which St. Cuthbert selected to pass the last years of his life in a solitary cell. He procured from the niggard soil a sustenance by his own industry, and "caused the desert rock to rejoice and be glad, and the solitary wilderness to blossom as a rose."

NOTE 18, P. 35, L. 26.

"The sea volcano pour'd its smoke."

The Rumble Churn. Vide Lewis's Sir Guy. At this place, in the calmest weather, is heard a subterraneous noise, caused by the flowing of the sea through the aperture of a hollow rock; but when the water is agitated, and impelled by wind and tide into this

medium, its operations are most magnificent, sending up to a vast height a prodigious body of foam, which flies off in streams of feathery spray in all directions at a certain elevation. There is a similar phenomenon, called 'the Devil's Bellows,' in Cornwall; and another at Bosherston Meer in Pembrokeshire.

NOTE 19, P. 39, L. 17.

Of Cuthbert beads and native pearl.

A name given to the *Encrinites*, which are found in great abundance among the rocks at Holy Island, and sold to strangers as the attributed workmanship of the saint. According to popular tradition, this holy man often visits the shores of Lindisfern in the night, and sitting on one rock, uses another as his anvil, on which he forges and fashions these beads.

"Saint Cuthbert sits and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name."
Brockett's Glossary.

NOTE 20, P. 38, L. 29.

His speaking eye on Lindisfern.

Lindisfern or Holy Island is situated about two miles from the main land, and is divided from it only during the time of high water, and can therefore be considered as an island but twice every twenty-four hours.

With the ebb and flow its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day the waves efface
Of staves and sandall'd feet the trace.

The name of Lindisfern is derived from its being opposite to the small brook Lindis. It is also called Holy Island from the supposed sanctity of the monks who occupied its monastery, the ruins of which denote great antiquity. The arches are of the Saxon order, and are supported upon short and massy pillars. Some of the windows are pointed, and thus indicate that they had been placed in the building long after its original foundation. Sir Walter Scott has thus happily described its supposed appearance, when the hooded fraternity brooded within its walls:

> In Saxon strength that abbey frown'd,
> With massive arches broad and round,
> That rose alternate, row on row,
> On ponderous columns, short and low,
> Built ere the art was known,
> By pointed aisle and shafted stalk,
> The arcades of an alley'd walk
> To emulate in stone.

Lindisfern was the episcopal seat of the See of Durham during the early ages of Christianity, and had the title of "St. Cuthbert's Patrimony" bestowed upon it, on account of the fame of Cuthbert, the sixth Bishop, who was placed in the calendar on account of his superior holiness. After his death in the hermitage at the Fern islands, his body was interred here, where it slept in peace till the Danes, in the year 763, made a descent upon the island, and nearly destroyed the monastery. The body of the saint was carried off by the monks, to whom it indicated the places at which it chose to rest; which it finally did

at Durham, and where of consequence the See was established.

It is owing to the circumstance of Holy Island having been once an episcopal see, that the county-palatine of Durham is found so curiously to dove-tail itself with Northumberland, even to the gates of Berwick. A legal jurisdiction still remains with the count-palatine over lands which formerly belonged to the patrimony of St. Cuthbert.—*Vide Border Tour.*

NOTE 21, P. 41, L. 26.

Sapphire with topaz rich inlaid.

Oriental topaz, emerald, and amethyst, are only varieties of sapphire. Amethyst is a native of Northumberland; a brilliant crystal called Dunstanborough diamond is frequently found there. One great end of these attempted illustrations is to prove that traditions in general, however clothed in the language of fiction, are vehicles of important truths. The traditions of Northumberland, like those of Germany, very frequently point to the extreme value of her mineral productions under the symbol of treasure buried in the earth. The *black* corby crow, that guards the hoards of silver, under the rocks of Tynemouth, very ingeniously indicates the presence of coal and its inestimable worth.

THE

WANDERING KNIGHT

OF

Dunstanborough Castle.

BY JAMES SERVICE.

"Return he cannot, nor continue where he is: to shift his being, is to exchange one misery with another; and every day that comes, comes to decay a day's work in him."—*Shakspeare.*

The Wandering Knight.

Those who are fond of pondering on events long since passed away, and of musing on the mendacity and credulity of human nature exhibited through the medium of fabulous story, will find "ample scope and verge enough" for the powers of reflection and fancy in the annals and traditions connected with the venerable ruins of Dunstanborough Castle, whose high and mouldering towers are now "accessible only to the feathered wanderers of air."

From the remote antiquity and uncertain import of this Legend, it is impossible to decipher its genuine meaning and origin. The doom entailed on the Red Cross Knight for his imbecility of purpose, and want of fortitude, is similar to that inflicted on the Porter of Pontius Pilate for the wanton and insulting cruelty he exercised towards our Saviour, when he was dragged to the judgment-hall. Tradition says that this hard-hearted Jew (his name is supposed to be Hareach, a Hebrew term signifying *the prolonged*) struck Jesus on the back, exclaiming, "Go faster, Jesus;" on which Jesus replied, "I am going, but thou shalt tarry till I come." He is destined to live for ever, and at the conclusion of each succeeding century, after a severe fit of illness, he returns to the same state of youth he was in when Jesus suffered,

which was thirty years of age. After the crucifixion, he left the place of his abode,

And wandered up and down the world,
A runagate most base.

No resting could he find at all,
No ease nor heart's content,
No house, nor home, nor biding place,
But wandering forth he went.

From town to town, in foreign lands,
With grieved conscience still,
Repenting for the heinous guilt
Of his fore-passed ill.

Thus, after some few ages past
Of wandering up and down,
He much again desired to see
Jerusalem's renown.

But finding it all quite destroyed,
He wandered thence with woe;
Our Saviour's words, which he had spoke,
To verify and shew. *

Thus both victims in the catastrophe are depicted as suffering a forlorn and unalterable destiny,—a solitary and hopeless pilgrimage through the lapse of succeeding ages "never ending, still beginning; the same thing over again, and yet still different."

The incidents in this Legend are nearly the same as given by the late Mr. T. Hastings, Schoolmaster at Dunstan, with the exception of the enchanted sword suddenly changing into a serpent.

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* Vide "The Wandering Jew," Dr. Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.

From the similarity of events in Sir Guy and this piece, it is highly probable that Lewis had his information from the same source; for the late honoured teacher was a man to whom, on such subjects, great deference was paid, he being profoundly skilled in local antiquities and legendary lore. This story is still very popular in the vicinage of the Castle, and, when related, is imbued with more or less poetical embellishment and marvellous "conceites" in proportion to the fanciful ideas of the narrator.

The Author of "The Seeker" has been too precipitate in concluding that the *horn and sword* are only peculiar to Shewin' Shiels. These instruments have always been and still are recognised by all who are acquainted with the Romance. The Author of the "Border Tour" acknowledges the *horn and sword*, in the felicitous outline he has drawn of the subject in question. He observes that the Castle is a very striking object, and is not less interesting when closely examined. It is situated upon a conical hill, and around its base are scattered stones so numerous and large that it might be imagined a legion of fiends had diverted themselves by pounding a huge rock in pieces. Nor has tradition failed to people the ruins with beings shadowy and terrific. Lewis, whose misdirected genius produced the "Monk," and who, by the publication of his "Tales of Wonder," first brought the high talents of Sir Walter Scott into notice, has commemorated one of these traditions in his tale of "Sir Guy, the Seeker."

Sir Guy, who had retired from the army upon half-pay, and who, like many H. P.'s of these days, found time to hang heavily upon his hands, spent the whole of it, not consumed at the confessional, or in mumbling over his pater-noster at home, in roaming among the deserted walls of Dunstanborough in search of treasure reported to have been buried within them, or in hopes of finding memorials of the wars of the olden time. When thus employed, at the midnight hour which spirits call their own, the entrance to the innermost recesses was thrown open, and he was invited to enter. Brilliant lights danced on the summit of every remaining turret, while sounds unearthly and terrific were heard. Sir Guy pushed bravely on till he reached a portal, whence swung a sword and trumpet, bearing an inscription that the treasures of the castle were to become his who made a proper choice between the instruments. He seized the trumpet, and blew a loud note; when suddenly the lights were extinguished; the cries of defiance were changed to those of derision, and voices were heard in the air, mocking the craven who called for aid, when his own right hand should have achieved the adventure. Years thereafter did he travel the ruins in the vain hope of his prowess being once more tried, and finally became a crazed man.

There are numerous caverns in the rocks which guard the coast, and the ocean roaring among these may be heard at a considerable distance.

THE

WANDERING KNIGHT.

GREY Dunstanbro'! thy turrets eld and hoary,
Full well may claim the Minstrel's idle song,
To chronicle a superstitious story,
That oft has pleased the wond'ring village throng:
To thee such wizard spell-like powers belong.—
Mine be the task (no other charm infusing)
Gay flowers to twine the Muses' wreaths among;
No recreant weeds my mystic theme abusing:
Sweet be the lay that sooths a lonely hour of musing!

Where the wild sweeping billows incessantly roar,
Thro' the rude caverned cliffs of Northumbria's shore,
From its bleak rocky throne, in magnificent pride,
The turrets of Dunstanborough gleam o'er the tide;
The only memorial of all that is told
Of its sieges and valorous chieftains of old.
On its grassy parterre, if old legends say true,
No flowers, but the daisy, reflected their hue;
Nor tree, nor a shrub, e'en though cultured with care,
E'er displayed to the sun its gay foliage there,—
Save one—at the portal—a dark waving yew,
That sprang, and decayed on the spot where it grew.

As a billow-worn bark, of its cordage bereft,
To the fury of tempests all lonely is left;
So left to decay are thy desolate walls,
For sunk are thine arches, and roofless thy halls,
That oft have re-echoed the sentinel's song,
When the dull hour of watching sped slowly along:
And oft have they sighed to the maiden's soft lay,
That constancy breathed for her warrior away;
And when the grey Minstrel his harp gaily strung
To melody's numbers, how sweet have they rung!
Now, alas! they but sound when the wild fox is scared
From his den in the rocks,—or the curlew is heard
In response to the owlet's monotonous song,
As he flits, by the moon-light, thy turrets among.

Though mould'ring thy turrets, and ruinous they be,
Yet *one* human being—if human is he—
Still clings to thy remnants of splendid decay,
Who rests not by night, nor yet slumbers by day;
Unsheltered and friendless, no covert he seeks;
But for ever and aye his lone vigils he keeps.
He is oft seen to weep, and is oft heard to sigh,
Till breathless his bosom, and tearless his eye;
Then fixed are his steps, till his feelings return,
Like a statue of stone by a sepulchre urn.

Full many sweet summers their fragrance have shed,
Full many rich autumns their bounties have spread,
Since the dew of despair on his bosom sank chill,
And the fount of his hopes grew eternally still.

One fatal remembrance lies cold at his heart,
And the long lapse of years hath not rent it apart;
One image of sorrow, that flits not away,—
One feeling of terror, that will not decay.

'Twas night, and the voice of the tempest was high,
When darkly those turrets first rose on his eye;
Fast fell the rain drops—the hurricanes blew—
Loud pealed the hoarse thunder—the forked lightnings flew.
He swept, like the whirlwind, o'er mountain and dell,
And his armour flashed back the blue gleam as it fell;
And a thousand rude echoes 'woke fearfully round,
As his war-charger strained up the slippery mound,
Till the summit they gained, where the dark portal frowned.

He reined his courser to the yew
That there, all lonely, gloomed and wept,
And a moment paused—as shrilly through
Its foliage dark the night-winds blew,
And round the ruined fabric swept.

There, in the arch-way, rude and high,
Sought refuge from the inclement sky;
It sprang from gothic columns tall,
And entrance gave to tower and hall.
But the studded gates were closed and fast,
And many a year, 'tis said, had passed
Since mortal eye had seen unfold
The massy valves of that entrance old.

He leaned him by the arch-way's side,
In youthful valour's armed pride,
And round upon the prospect drear
Cast not a thought nor glance of fear.
Three plumes of raven hue o'erhung
A silver helm, from whence they sprung,
That high had waved where, far and wide,
Red battle rolled his fiercest tide.
A braver knight ne'er trode afar
The hallowed fields of Salem's war,
When Europe's red-cross bands essayed
To win the tomb where our Lord was laid.—
He listened to the rain aloof,
"Plashing on tower and turret roof,"—
The curlew's shriek,—the owlet's cry,—
The gale careering wildly by,—
The sullen dash and bursting roar
Of billows on the rocky shore.

But sudden on his ear there fell
A monastery's midnight knell;
And scarce the sad and solemn sound
Had died amid the cliffs around,
When, from the castle's inner hall,
A long loud shriek there rang,
Piercing the portal's ponderous wall,—
And the startled knight upsprang.
With ready hand, he grasped his brand;
But ere the glittering blade he drew,
Again on his ear came that sound of fear,
And the gates wide open in thunder flew!

At once the blast was hushed,
No more it whistled shrill;
No more the billows rushed;
The curlew's cry was still;
To his nook the raven fled;
The wild fox sprang away;
And a silence, deep and dread,
Sank o'er the fabric grey!

A glimmering light appearing,
The portal's gloom dispelled;
And a shadowy hand uprearing
A lamp, the knight beheld.
A hand and arm alone,—
Nor form nor face was there,—
All ghastly white they shone,
By the dim lamp's fitful glare!

And thus a hollow voice upspoke—
"Thou daring thing of mortal clay!
"By whom the spell may yet be broke,
"That keeps me from the tomb away!
"If ne'er thy dauntless cheek and brow
"The hue of pallid fear avow;
"If, all unmoved, thine eye can brook
"On danger's wildest form to look,
"How dark soe'er its aspect be,—
"Then, daring mortal, follow me!
"Within these walls a captive weeps,
"Bound by a long-enduring spell;

" A spotless maid, whom vengeance keeps
" Within a living tomb to dwell.
" If, for afflicted beauty's sake,
" Thy soul a deed of fear canst dare,
" Thy hand the magic bands may break,
" That, viewless, clasp the imprisoned fair;
" If woman's tears have charms for thee;
" If virtue's champion thou wouldst be;
" Then, daring mortal, follow me!"

" Lead on!"—the gallant knight replied;
" Whate'er thou art, I'll follow thee!
" Whate'er of good or ill betide,
" This arm the captive maid shall free!"

Slow moved away the spectre hand,
And the knight pursued with naked brand;
His eye glared wild, and discomposed,
When, with echoing crash, the portal closed,
And prisoned him there, alone to glide,
With a viewless phantom for his guide!
They crossed the court and silent hall,
But desolation was over all;
And the vaulted pavement loudly rang
To his measured step, and armour's clang.
Through the chancel's gloomy aisles they passed,
And the light, that fearful cresset cast,
Flashed far around, and far aloof,
On the pillars that propped the dusky roof;
On sculptured tombs, and statues worn,
On scutcheons riven, and banners torn,

That dark, on high, o'er the galleries hung,
And around their shades protracted flung.
They reached a winding stair at length,
Blackened with eld, and of ponderous strength;
And far aloft, with heavy stride,
The knight pursued his formless guide;
With soul resolved, and weapon bared,
For danger or for death prepared;
Till the top they gained, and paused before
A vaulted arch, and massy door,
That, with jarring peal, wide open flew,
And the spectre hand passed slowly through.

They entered a rich and magnificent hall,
Where flower-patterned tapestry waved on each wall;
Twice fifty strong shafts, on a mosaic floor,
Supported its roof, that was spangled all o'er
With bright flaming lamps, that seemed to outvie
In splendour the stars of a winter night's sky.
To each of the columns a bronze steed was tied,
On which a stout knight of white marble did ride:
With swords all were armed—all with helmets were
crowned,
Where clustering plumes of white ivory frowned.
In the centre, beneath a rich canopy's shade,
Stood an altar with mystic devices inlaid;
Of emeralds composed, and festooned with a robe
Of diamonded net-work; on which stood a globe
Of purest of crystal, with coral enwreathed;
In which long that fair captive had pensively grieved.

What language can tell, or what pencil can trace,
The beauty that beamed in her angelic face!
Her cheeks they partook of the wild rose's hue;
Her eyes were the summer sky's softest of blue;
On her sweet roseate lips a smile faintly beamed,
As it shone thro' her tears (still more lovely it seemed)
That unconsciously dropped on a bosom of snow,
Like dew-drops, that gem the white hawthorn's bough;
Her dark glossy hair met her white flowing vest,
And twined round a diamond that gleamed in her breast:
Replete was her form with each magical grace,
As suppliant she knelt in her crystalized vase.

Long gazed the knight on this captive bright,
And thus at length began :—
" O! lady, I'll dare for thee whate'er
" May be done by mortal man!"

No word the hapless maiden spoke;
But again the hollow voice of his guide
On the death-like silence fearfully broke,
And thus, in thrilling tones, it cried :—

" Vainly an answer dost thou seek;
" No word that prisoned fair can speak,
" Till a fearless knight (as I now tell)
" With daring arm, dissolve the spell,
" And break for ever that crystal cell.
" Behold yon form, of marble white,
" Of ponderous limb, and giant height!

" A hunter he, in days long flown;
" Now doomed for ever to frown in stone.

" Around his waist a horn is braced,
" Wrought by a mystic hand of yore;
" Whose blast must make this fabric shake,
" Ere the power of that mighty spell be o'er;
" Or yon sheathed brand, with daring hand,
" Be severed from his side;—
" But fearless must be that mortal he
" Who dares the event abide.

" Now, warrior, take thine awful choice,
" To wake the bugle's deafening voice;
" Or the giant's spell-bound blade to draw—
" (A task, I warn thee, of peril and awe!)—
" But on which soe'er thou dar'st decide,
" Whate'er bechance, whate'er betide,
" *Beware thou cast it not aside!*
" Or a darker doom awaiteth thee
" Than told to mortal ears may be."—

A glance on each the warrior cast,
Then manned his soul anew;
And the massy and mystic sword at last
With desperate force he drew.
But scarce the blade the sheath forsook,
When to life the giant sprang!
And the charm-wrought bugle fiercely took,
And blew a blast, that the fabric shook,
And the hall like thunder rang!

And each marble knight shook his plume of white,
And drew his glittering blade;
Whilst their coursers' feet the pavement beat,
And deafening clamour made.
As leopards burst from their wild-wood den,
They rushed on the single warrior then;
Waving their weapons wide on high,
As their victim was doomed at once to die!

In fixed amaze, he bent his gaze
On his hundred foes of stone;
And shuddered with awe, when the blade he saw
Of the mystic sword, he dared to draw,
Was *a living serpent grown!*
With conscious start, he flung it apart,
Nor thought on his guide's command;
And his own true blade drew to his aid,
And rushed on the marble band!

But straight the light, each cresset gave,
Was quenched to a feeble spark!
And the haunted hall became as the grave,
As silent, and as dark!
And first, upon the stillness dead,
A groan of anguish broke!
Then next, a voice of anger dread
In hollow murmurs spoke!—

"Devoted wretch! whose coward hand
"Forsook the consecrated brand;

" When one bold thrust, or fearless stroke,
" At once the powerful spell had broke,
" And silently dissolved in air,
" The mock array of warriors there;
" Now take thy doom, and rue the hour
" Thou looked on Dunstanborough's tower!
" Be thine the canker of the soul,
" That life yields nothing to control!
" Be thine the mildew of the heart,
" That death alone can bid depart!
" And death—thine only refuge—be
" From age to age forbidden thee!"

It ceased—and again through the gloom appeared
The lamp, by that death-like hand upreared:
But sight and hearing soon were o'er,
For the giant hunter dealt a blow,
That, prone upon the marble floor,
Stretched the pale warrior lifeless and low!
Till the purple morning's early ray,
In that dark and dreary trance he lay!
He 'woke—the pageant all was flown;
The hall of state—the knights of stone—
The crystal globe—the captive fair,
Condemned to weep unpitied there—
All, all were gone! and, in their stead,
The portal arch was o'er his head,
Dripping its tears of dew upon
His pallid brow and features wan.

Prone on the earth he found him laid,
In rude and wretched weeds arrayed;
His courser fled, and the aged yew
Rent by the bursting leaven through!

Full many an age hath glided by,
Yet still the castle he lingers nigh;
And vainly seeks again to find
The stairs to the haunted hall that wind.
Each hollow vault, and secret way,
He totters through, both night and day;
Through many an aisle, through many a tomb,
Through chapel, dungeon, hall, and room;
Far as the aged pile extends,
From morn till eve, his course he bends;
And to himself, in accents low,
Mutters his tale of fear and woe.
Five hundred years their course have run,
Nor yet his search, nor life is done!

THE

CORAL WREATH;

OR,

The Spell-Bound Knight.

BY W. G. THOMPSON.

"Let FICTION come, upon her vagrant wings,
Wafting ten thousand colours through the air,
Which, by the glances of her magic eye,
She blends and shifts at will through countless forms
Her wild creation."

AKENSIDE.

THE idea of this story is taken from a small but well-written poem, lately published, entitled "The Wandering Knight of Dunstanborough Castle," the history of which, as it will enable the reader the more fully to understand this, I shall briefly relate. A knight from the Holy Land, travelling in the vicinity

"Of Dunstanborough's caverned shore,"

found himself compelled to take shelter in the ruined Castle of Dunstanborough, where it became his task to attempt the freedom of an enchanted lady who was there confined in a globe

"Of purest of crystal, with coral enwreath'd."

A mysterious voice warns him of his danger—informs him of the means he must use—and forbids him to throw the object of his choice aside. Unfortunately for himself, however, he DID throw aside a charmed sword he had drawn in the cause, and was immediately doomed to linger there for ever!

Happening to hear a gentleman observe that it would have been much more agreeable had the result been fortunate, and recollecting that the Edinburgh Review says "the readers of romance do not like an unsuccessful warrior," I immediately determined the liberation of the wanderer. How that has been accomplished, the following pages must bear witness.

THE

CORAL WREATH.

HAIL! wild inspirer of the Poet's dream!
Glance from thy rosy regions bright and far,
One cheering ray—one soul-enkindling beam—
A hallowed beacon—a life-guiding star!
Maid of the shining, star-bespangled dome!
Grant me one floweret of thy wreath divine!
Come from thy pearly throne—in triumph come—
And guide an humble votary to thy shrine!

Together let us tread the verge of space—
Together let us wing through viewless skies—
And cull, in untrode fields, each golden grace
Of wild Imagination's boundless dyes!
Together let us, in yon starry sphere,
Strike the wild harp to soft delicious lays—
To fairy tale—of periled maiden dear—
Of griffins, giants, dwarfs, and "fire-eyed fays!"

And then, by moon-light, in thy fragrant bowers,
We'll tell of broken hearts and perished forms—
The love-lorn maniac scattering her flowers—
The wayward wanderer on his "hill of storms."

And when "th' inconstant moon" shall cease to spread
Her lovely radiance round us, then we'll sing
Perchance of battles—heroes mighty, dead—
The tyrant baned—the victor triumphing!

Upward again—upon the comet's track—
'Mid glowing worlds again we'll gladly soar,
Till softer themes shall woo us gently back,
To greet with joy the while-deserted shore.
Come then, bright maiden! from thy starry home,
Thine own, adopted, cherished, let me be!
Come with thy fanes, thine altars, glories, come,
My goddess thou!—FOR I WILL WORSHIP THEE!

Who is it that sits by the lone turret's steep—
Who rests not by day—who by night cannot sleep—
Who incessantly moans to the waves' sullen roar,
As they welter and dash on Northumbria's shore?
Why gazes he now on that time-conquered tower—
Does he think on the days when it stood in its power—
When beauty's fair daughters, all brilliant and sheen,
Enzoned in the robes of their radiance were seen?
Is his thought on the days when it stood in its might,
And, aloft, on the plains in magnificence frowned—
When its rude echoes rang to the step of the knight,
As he strode, all enmailed, from the field of the fight,
Thro' the hall of his fathers, with victory crowned?
Thinks he now of the feats on that sward which were done,
When the lists were prepared, and the tourney begun—

When the knight in his saddle, the lance in the rest,
Was as fearless and firm as the wave-breaking rock—
His heart beating high in the glow of his breast,
And his eye on the maiden that heart loved the best—
Till the trumpet tone broke—then! away for the shock?
Does he hear thro' the long lapse of years that have fled,
The soul-stirring sounds of the harper's wild strain,
As he sung of the war-field—the chieftains that bled—
Or melted the fair with the breathings of pain?
Oh! the quivering chords of the minstrel are still—
And the breeze-born echoes, they died on the hill—
And the fingers that 'woke the wild strains, where are they?
All skilless—all wasted—deep, deep in the clay.
The knight and his charger are mouldering now,
And dank in the earth is the helmeted brow,
And far in his bosom the revellers prey,
Nor moves he a finger to scare them away.
The lists! they are broken—the sward is in weeds—
Forgotten the scene of high chivalry's deeds.
And the fair!—oh! all darkly and deep in decay
The young, and the true, and the beauteous are laid—
The glances, the sighs, and the smiles!—all away!
Not a lip for the kiss—not a brow for the braid.
No—no—none of these form the theme of his sorrow—
One subject, one only, possesses his soul!
Not a gleam, for the coming, of hope can he borrow;
And the present—e'en it is beyond his control!
Look on him—mark that burning sigh—
The fountain of his tears is dry—

He speaks not—aught of human sound,
Save his own deep moan, is never found!
No human step the eye may trace
Near his devoted dwelling-place.
Five hundred years have o'er him rolled
Since first his fate of fear was told—
And thousands, thousands more will roll,
Ere freshness breathes upon his soul—
Death, death alone his wounds can heal,
And death on earth he ne'er must feel---
No never---still to life a slave—
Without life's latest hope---the grave.
Look on him---that red-rusted steel,
That arms him forth from head to heel,
Shone bright in fields of fame afar,
When banded legions rushed to war,
And fearless fought and fearless fell
In combat with the infidel!
Gereddin! what a form was thine
Upon the fields of Palestine,
When Moslem myriads quailed beneath
Thy war of bondage, blood, and death!
Oh! 'tis not now as on that day
He smote the glittering crescent down,
He scarce can scare the birds away,
That hunger leads to meet his frown.
But fear them not—the tiger's spring—
His fiercest—could no succour bring
To thee, thou lost one---never, never—
Condemned to linger there for ever.

Death---death alone thy woes can seal,
And death thou'lt never, never feel.
Up! forth and wander! seek once more
The fatal chamber lost before!
Call forth again the spectre-light
That first flashed on thy startled sight!
Bid it again that hall disclose,
Where rest thy many marble foes!
Draw forth again the giant-brand,
In fear flung from thy coward hand!
Strike but one stroke the spell to part,
And clasp the maiden to thy heart!
Away! away! thou seekest in vain---
That path thou never wilt regain---
'Tis lost to thee---lost, lost for ever!
And thou wilt find it never, never!

Red gleams the lingering sun's last parting rays,
On turret, tree, and tower, the brightness plays;
How lovelily comes on the death of day,
As soft behind the hills light melts away,
And twilight plays upon the front of heaven,
Like youthful smiles or ere the heart is riven.
There seems a spell o'er nature---all so calm---
The sea all stillness and the earth all balm!
Anon the sea-breeze freshens, and the sky
Quits each bright hue, and to the extended eye
One mighty stretch of gloomy grey is spread,
Pillared in vastness on each mountain's head,

Till, thickening still, and blackening o'er the place,
Like death's dark shade upon a lovely face,
Plain, cloud, and mountain, mingle to the sight,
In all the vastness of unchequered night.
Gereddin sate him by the turret's base
That eve in silence; in his furrowed face
Black ghastliness was seated; his dull eye
Was raised in vacant stare towards the sky.
Unusual tremors shook him, his gaunt frame
Shivered with terror, and all o'er him came
A chillness colder than the ice of death—
His pulse beat languid, and his hard-drawn breath
Seemed parting from the seat of its sojourn,
Too feeble longer there to gasp or mourn:
It seemed as though, his years of penance past,
That evening was on earth to be his last.
Fierce sweeps the breeze along the rocky shore,
And doubly hoarse the rising billows roar;
The sea-birds, shrieking, to the turrets fly,
To shun the awful threatenings of the sky,
That pours, amid the darkness of its frown,
The huge black rain in rattling torrents down.
Far in the gloom the quivering lightning gleams,
And shews the dreadful darkness, which its beams
Fitful illumine, but can not dispel,
In all the angry murkiness of hell.

Fierce broke the livid lightnings round,
And deafening was the thunder's sound,

And far and wide, on hill and plain,
In plashing torrents poured the rain,
When loud and lingering screams of fear
Burst on the storm-drenched wanderer's ear.
He started---ne'er did screams so shrill
With joy a mourner's bosom thrill!
He smiled---five hundred years had fled
Unknown, unfelt, above his head,
Since from those turrets eld and grey,
Or sigh or sound had passed away,
Save the dull, oft-repeated moan,
That feebly from his breast had flown.
And well I ween e'en sounds of fear
Were rapture to his lonely ear.
The thunder's din, the lightning's gleam,
Were mingling now with shout and scream,
And deep and dreary echoes rang
Terrific with the hellish clang---
While on the bleak and fleeting blast
Sounds of exulting voices passed.
Now breathed such mournful melody,
The mourner deemed his lullaby
  Was singing in that hour of storm—
Anon a deeper, sterner sound,
Made every pulse with ardour bound,
  And every muscle start—
And fleeting tones of long-lost years
Poured dawning memory's earliest tears
  Like dew upon his heart;

And sorrow fled, and parching pain,
And freshness rushed in every vein
  Throughout his renovated form!
Once more he turned his step of pride
To where the spell-bound maiden cried;
But, ere to the ruined arch he came,
One mighty sheet of quivering flame
  Across his path-way blazed!
Fiercely he drew his trusty blade,
And twice to pass the flame essayed,
But twice in vain---that mystic light
Might never yield to armed knight.
Forth from that flame a sentence rang
More deafening than the thunder's clang---
  The knight in wonder gazed---
While bursting echoes wakening near
Prolonged the sounds of fate and fear.

The Song of the Spirits.

FIRST VOICE.

Wanderer in these ruins drear!
Wanderer---weary wanderer, hear!
Wildered wanderer! listen thee
To mysterious fate's decree:
If again thy mortal arm
Dare dissolve the magic charm,
Spell-bound wanderer, listen thee
To mysterious fate's decree!
Spirits of earth, of sea, and air,
Mystic spirits every where---

Whether in the depths below,
Or basking in the solar glow---
Whether on the wild wave sailing,
Or with mystic spell prevailing---
Whether on the haunted heath,
Or in coral caves beneath---
Whether on the night-cloud flying,
Or in beams of star-light lying---
Spirits of earth, of air, and sea,
Hear mysterious fate's decree!
Warrior! if thy arm be true
As when giant-brand it drew---
If nought again of coward fear
Impede thy valorous career---
Again the daring task be thine
The wreath of coral to untwine---
Once more it shall be given thee
To set the lovely mourner free---
Favoured knight! be true and bold!
Mystic sprite! unfold, unfold!

CHORUS OF MANY SPIRITS.

Knight! be fearless! knight! be bold!
Mystic sprite! unfold, unfold!

SECOND VOICE.

Warrior! from these walls of stone,
Earth and air responds thy moan—
Be thy heart no longer riven,
Thou art pardoned and forgiven.

Warrior! from her crystal home
Edith may not—cannot come,
Till armed knight, of valour true,
Cleave the wreath of coral through—
The ruby wreath that binds the tomb,
Where lovely Edith weeps her doom—
  Deep within the heaving sea,
Where mortal art has never sounded,
  Where none but magic spirits be,
That ruddy wreath was wrought and rounded—
'Twas the blood that fell from a mystic sprite,
In contest fierce with a valiant knight—
In many a sheen and pearly shell
'Twas caught by viewless hands as it fell,
And far to a cave in the ocean's bed,
In fay-drawn cars 'twas lodged and led—
And mystic legions o'er it wept,
And nightly vigils near it kept,
And in a drear and moonless hour
'Twas formed and framed with magic power,
And with flowers from fairy-land entwined,
A mighty spell 'twas doomed to bind.
Long years it lay in that deep cave,
Companioned with the ocean wave,
And the siren song of the sweet sea-maid,
As she tarried her emerald hair to braid.
At length, on a lovely summer morn,
To Dunstanborough's towers 'twas borne,
And round that crystal circle placed,
Which Edith's beauteous form embraced,

There doomed for ever to remain,
Till rent by warrior's steel in twain.
If, daring mortal! thy frail hand
Again may quail before that band,
The misery thou hast felt shall be
As one small drop of yonder sea,
Compared with that vast mighty whole
Which round these earthly empires roll,
To that which thou again shalt feel—
Which fate nor heaven shall free nor heal!
Daring knight! be true and bold!
Mystic guide! thy form unfold!

CHORUS OF MANY SPIRITS.

Daring knight! be true and bold!
Mystic guide! thy form unfold!

Forth from that barrier of flame
The warrior's new conductor came—
In fear one moment paused the knight—
In thunder sunk the opposing light—
The voices, spirits, all were gone,
The knight and guide remained alone.
The warrior paused—his lifted brand
Fell prostrate from his nerveless hand—
Against a mouldering fragment near
He bent before that thing of fear.
Its shape was human, and its height,
Composed it seemed of burning light,

And, as it fiercely waved him on,
Strode forth a fiery skeleton:
A scant and haggard arm was raised
  Above the grinning, ghastly head,
Whence livid meteors wildly blazed
  Like beacons round the graveless dead.
But, while in terror paused the knight,
Again came sounds of voices light,
And poured upon his wondering ear
The silvery sounds that banish fear;
And thus the welcome voices rolled—
"Favoured knight! be true and bold!"
Started the warrior from the pile
Where he had trembling leant the while,
And grasped again with eager hand
The friendly hilt of his fallen brand.
On went the spectre—on the knight,
Behind his perilous guide of light.
The aged, storm-scathed yew is passed—
The secret door is gained at last!
And lightnings wild, with angry flare,
Broke dreadly in the crumbling stair,
As upward, an unbidden guest,
To the magic hall the warrior pressed.
Prone flew, at the touch of that fiery guide,
The folding doors asunder wide;
Again flashed on the warrior's eyes
The rich reward of his high emprise—
The captive fair in her crystal hold,
Enzoned in the clasp of her coral fold!

On stately couch of crimson hue,
Bedecked with pearls and emeralds sheen,
And sapphires, clear as morning's blue,
With bars of silver set between—
And, high in arches, overflung,
With wreaths of pearl and diamonds hung,
Was a glittering, silken canopy,
Empurpled as an evening sky,
With radiant streaks of ruddy gold—
Like heaven's own rainbow all unrolled—
The maiden's crystal prison lay—
An argent cloud on morn's bright breast,
When night's dark vapours sink to rest
At the birth of a new-born day.
And from the roof the bright lamps' gleams
Glanced deeply down in meteor beams,
Displaying in one mellow glow
The rich magnificence below.
Nodded the while the down-plumes white
Of every mail-cased, marble knight,
As on their chargers, lance in hand,
They sate the giant-knight's command,
Who high on steed above the rest,
With magic bugle at his breast,
Sate leader of the warlike van.
Gereddin took the bugle true,
And thrice a charge to battle blew,
While round the pealing thunder ran.
Fearfully then through that high hall,
From echoing floor, and roof, and wall,

The lengthened shrieks of terror rang!
And wildly gazed the warrior round,
As he heard the hoofs of the bronze steeds sound,
While to life the marble myriad sprang!
Oh! 'twas a wondrous sight to see
These knights, and steeds of stone,
To life and action furious flee,
When the fated blast was blown!
Rushed then the knight to the crystal tomb,
And low he sank on his bended knee,
With "Lady, dear! from thy piteous doom
"Thine own true knight will rescue thee!"
No answer made the maiden fair
In act of supplication there;
But the tears streamed o'er her lovely face,
And her lip was pressed with a bursting sigh,
As she turned to heaven with peerless grace
The dazzling sheen of her tearful eye.
Whilst thus a taunting voice replied,
"Vaunt not, knight, of thy strength untried—
Mortal hand and mortal arm
May ne'er dissolve the potent charm
That holds the lady Edith there
In bonds of dark and deep despair;
Until she prize the giant's love,
From that dread doom she ne'er shall move,
Though thou and banded knights beside
In conflict for her freedom died—
Vaunt not, knight, of thy strength untried!

Ere from this hall thou mayest depart,
The chill of death will press thy heart—
Thy veins that swell so proudly now,
Will creep and curdle dull and slow—
The pangs thou wilt be doomed to feel
Nor earth nor heaven will sooth nor heal—
Vaunt not, knight, of thy strength untried."
That moment, at the warrior's need,
Forth rushed a stately sable steed—
With pointed links of burnished steel
Equipped from noble head to heel—
His saddle was girthed by no mortal hand—
By no mortal mind was his armour planned—
In mortal forge there never was known
Such steel as that on the black steed shone.
Prone at Gereddin's feet he knelt,
And when the warrior's weight he felt,
Dashed like a torrent-flood among
The couched spears of the marble throng.
Well fought Gereddin in that hour
In battle fierce with magic power;
And many a goodly helm was broke
Beneath the force of his mighty stroke;
And steed on steed rolled to the ground
Before the raven-charger's bound;
And wounded knights with dying groan
The warrior's deeds of prowess own;
While shrieks and cries of wild despair
Ring madly in the troubled air.

Now, every mounted foe subdued,
With looks that speak his gratitude,
The warrior from his steed descends,
And to the tomb of Edith bends,
To smite with trusty brand so true
The fated wreath of coral through—
He struck—but his blows fell wide on air—
New arms—new foes were gathering there!
Before the wondering warrior's eyes
A thousand hostile spears arise---
But in his breast for every spear
A heart is glowing void of fear—
And on that rich and gorgeous bed,
In writhing, slimy circles spread,
With eyes out-flaming vengeful ire,
And forked tongues of venomed fire,
A thousand hideous serpents play,
To keep the victor-knight away—
But though each bite were valour's bane—
Though every fang should gore a vein—
And poison's deepest, deadliest flood
Should mingle with his dearest blood—
His last, fell blow shall be for thee,
Fair maid! and for thy liberty!
On pressed the knight---down shrank the spears—
In vain each hissing head uprears—
In vain around his limbs they twine—
Shorn, hacked to atoms, they resign
The combat to the mighty one,
Who, sprent with slaughter, rushes on,

Amid the dying, venomed crew,
And cleaves the wreath of coral through!
While peals again the stirring sound
Of the angry thunder's rushing bound—
And gleams again the lightning's glare,
Amid the shrieks of mad despair—
And sinks the slaughtered ruins—all
That erst remained of that bright hall—
The wreath, the globe, the beauteous bed—
All darkened, shivered, shrunk, and sped!
All—save the knight and his peerless fair—
The magic fate they may not share.

'Tis past—the magic spell is o'er,
And lovely Edith weeps no more
In the coral clasp of her circled dome,
Like a seraph in a crystal tomb.
The spell is broke—and the years long fled
Are but as so many moments sped—
Upon each form nor age nor blight
Appears revealed to mortal sight—
Of all the nights of pain and terror,
Of all the scenes of grief and horror,
Gereddin, in thy portly mien,
No transient trace can now be seen—
And Edith's roses bloom as fair
As she had ne'er been prisoned there—
As bright and free is her blue eyes' beam,
As day's first, lucid, orient stream—

As bland and blithe is the dimpling smile,
As pure, as sweet, as 'reft of guile,
As that which first on Adam broke,
When from his earliest sleep he 'woke,
'Mid verdant trees and blooming flowers,
And met his Eve in Eden's bowers!

THE FAIRIES

OF

FAWDON HILL.

"Oh! well I know the enchanting mien
Of my lov'd muse, my Fairy Queen!
Her rokley of green with its sparry hue,
Its warp of the moon-beam, and weft of the dew;
Her smile, where a thousand witcheries play,
And her eye that steals the soul away."

HOGG.

The Fairies of Fawdon Hill.

POPULAR tradition has evinced her faithfulness in transmitting from age to age the superstitious belief that Fawdon Hill is the royal residence of the "Queen Mab" of Northumberland and all her elfin courtiers, and that the picturesque grounds adjacent are the scenes of their moonlight gambols and midnight revelries. Legends still existing among the peasantry represent the mystical attendants of 'fancy's midwife' as being very diminutive in stature, with features delicate, complexion fair, expressive of infantine innocence and beauty, and always decked in pea-green costume. Others again partake of a portraiture altogether dissimilar; being deemed cunning, deceitful, selfish, and cruel; while the disposition of the first exhibits much activity, intelligence, and kindness. They are divided into tribes or castes, each exhibiting a distinct character, manifested by the single-hearted acts of benevolence in some, and in the uncouth oddity and mischievous pranks of others. Their abodes are supposed to be in the bowels of mountains, hollow rocks and caves, shades, and solitudes, far removed from the busy haunts of man.

All the theories that have been started to explain the origin of these preternatural beings have terminated in this common hypothesis, that they form an intermediate link between man and the spirits of air. If the tales of the credulous "can be in aught believed," they were introduced into Britain from Palestine by the Crusaders. Yet we read that our

Saxon ancestors believed in their existence long before they left their German forests. The popular belief of northern nations is that they are spirits out of the pale of salvation, as noticed in a Swedish Legend.

"Thine airy form is drooping,
Thy cheek is pale with dree;
And torrents thou wilt weep poor fay,
No Saviour lives for thee."

The following poetical picture, illustrative of the habits and avocations of these "righte merrie" elves, will afford some interesting amusement to trace the whimsical opinions of the Poets concerning them.

"Come, follow, follow me,
You, fairy elves that be,
Which circle on the green,
Come follow Mab your queen.
Hand in hand let's dance around,
For this place is fairy ground.

Upon a mushroom's head,
Our table-cloth we spread;
A grain of rye, or wheat,
Is manchet, which we eat;
Pearly drops of dew we drink
In acorn cups fill'd to the brink.

The grasshopper, gnat, and fly,
Serve for our minstrelsie;
Grace said, we dance awhile,
And so the time beguile;
And if the moon doth hide her head,
The glow-worm lights us home to bed.

On tops of dewy grass,
So nimbly do we pass,
The young and tender stalk
Ne'er bends when we do walk;
Yet in the morning may be seen
Where we the night before have been."

"Some flit the sluttish housewife's couch around,
And pinch and plague her while in slumber bound,
Or lead with meteor fire the pilgrim wrong,
Or glide with corse-lights churchyard's paths along,
Or from its cradle steal the new-born heir,
To place some fairy's idiot offspring there,
Or lure young wanton knights to join their band,
And live the pleasant life of elfin land,
Till seven swift years elapsed (so legends tell)
Their souls discharge king Oberon's debt to hell."
Vide the Tale of Tam Lin.

"But others gentle, sweeter tasks pursue,
These quaff in acorn cups the nectarine's dew,
Which *those* by fire-flies borne through ether soar,
Or secret ocean's coral groves explore,
Or plunder the wild bee, or gild their plumes
With gleam of moonshine; or condense perfumes
Of power in spells, from flowery banks, or play
(Close hid in heather bells) a thousand frolics gay,
And bid the wings of love waft their blithe hours
away." Oberon's Henchman.

Corbet supposes these little creatures to have fled from this country during the progress of the Elizabethean march of intellect, and to have taken refuge in some other kingdom "more friendly to supernatural spirits, and more grateful for supernatural assistance." Chaucer thus accounts for their disappearance:—

"In olde dayes of the king Artour,
Of which that Bretons speken gret honour,
All was this lond fulfilled of faerie;
The elf-quene with hire joly compagnie,
Danced ful oft in many a grene mede.
This was the old opinion as I rede;
I speke of many hundred yeres ago;
But now can no man see non elves mo,
For now the grete charitee and prayeres
Of limitoures* and other holy freres,

* Begging Friars.

That serchen every land and every streme,
As thikke as motes in the sonne beme,
Blissing halles, chambres, kichenes, and boures,
Citees and burghes, castles high, and toures,
Thropes and bernes, shepenes and dairies,
This maketh that there ben no faeries."

The following erudite extract from the Quarterly Review displays a classical illustration of the close affinity these local tales of supernatural agency bear to those of the mythic or poetic age, when popular mythology diffused itself over all nations from "Indus to the Pole."

"When the fables of popular superstition are contemplated in detail, we discover a singular degree of uniformity in that realm wherein most diversity might be expected—in the ideal world. Imagination seems to possess a boundless power of creation and combination; and yet the beings which have their existence only in fancy when freely called into action, in every climate and every age, betray so close an affinity to one another, that it is scarcely possible to avoid admitting that imagination had little share in giving them their shape and form. Their attributes and character are impressed by tokens, proving that they resulted rather from a succession of doctrines than from invention; that they were traditive, and not arbitrary. The vague credulity of the peasant agrees with the systematic mythology of the sages of primeval times. Nations whom the ocean separates are united by their delusions. The village gossip recognises, though in ignorance, the divinities of classical antiquity, and the Hamadryads of Greece and the Elves of Scandinavia join the phantoms who swarm around us. There is much reason to suppose that the character of the fairy has arisen from the amalgamation of Roman, Celtic, Gothic, and Oriental mythology."

THE

FAIRIES OF FAWDON HILL.

Coy spring to summer's hot embrace
Had yielded; and his jocund face
Was flushed with triumph; she, frail thing,
Reclined on Zephyr's filmy wing,
Again aspired her native heaven,
And melted in the blaze of even!
That form dissolved in ecstacy,
Which, like her own Anemone,
Was born of blushes and a sigh.
Then from the blue thin-clouded sky,
Like oil-drops poured into a fleece,
The scent-distilling dews of peace
And promise fell.—Then burst around
Of nature's joy the smother'd sound;
Then summer laugh'd; the hour was mirth,
Heaven, light, air, odour; and green earth
One shower of blossoms, robed as fine
As the star-spangled jessamine.
Rolling o'er grassy fields were seen
Alternate waves of grey and green,
As the breeze swept, with grateful motion,
The bosom of the mimic ocean.

The last pale primrose from the nook
Dropp'd into the diminish'd brook;
The sheep had lost their winter's coat,
And hoarser grew the cuckoo's note,
And scarce one patch of winter's snow
On Cheviot's side appear'd to glow.
But mossy hills and silent glens,
Where solitary shepherds stray,
And far-receding vales and dens,
Where Breamish bursts his foaming way,
Invite the poet to explore
The rocks which Linhope leaps in pride,
The craggy brow of huge Dunmore,
And high cairn-crested Hedgley's side.

The sunbeam burst on Brandon Hall,
And burnish'd the windows and silver'd the wall;
And the crimson light of morning fell
On Fawdon Hills, where the Fairies dwell.
Soft as the ray of the crescent moon,
That hallows the Fairies' festive noon,—
The noon of night, when the clear blue sky
And numberless stars inverted lie
On the breast of the scarcely-stirring stream,
When waked by the elfin-star's dawning beam,
The little green hunter winds his horn,
And dew-drops start from the snow-spangled thorn;
For within each cup of its blossom lay,
Nestled from day-light, a minikin fay.

Some start, as the notes on the distance swell,
Like drops of gold from the cowslip bell;
At the blast of the horn they spring to the ground,
And gather the little green hunters round.
The hunters' horn again is sounded,
And every fay to its toil hath bounded;
Blue, green, and pink, and brown and grey,
Hors'd on their butterflies, gallop away.

Mock violets hid in the wood-skirted dell,
Forget-me-not, heart's-ease, and hyacinths blue,
Heath flower, and eyebright, and slender harebell,
And every floweret of azure hue
Is stript of its leaflets as fast as thought,
And pile on pile to the hunter is brought;
And the hill is carpeted round with a zone,
Like the pale Tarquoise or the Lazuli stone.
One troop has frozen big drops of dew,
And spangled with diamonds the girdle of blue;
A second has gather'd the glow-worms' light,
And set them like stars in the temple of night,
Till the sky above, and the sky below,
Appear with similar fires of glow.
The horn of the hunter is sounded again,
And Fawdon Hill is cleft in twain;
And the Fairy Queen from her porphyry bower,
Surrounded by every vassal power,
Comes like the crescented queen of the hour.
The lubberly Robin and Brownie quaint,
Spirits whose pencils the rainbows paint,

Nymphs of the valley, wood, mountain, and stream,
Shadows that oft in a lover's day-dream
Assume a fair and palpable form;
Spirits that ride on the wings of the storm,
And their harps to the voice of the north attune;
Elves that bathe in the tears of the moon,
And the subtler essences still, that ply
Their tasks in the midst, between earth and sky,
That draw the meteor's fiery car,
And catch in its flight the falling star,
Which is set, as the gifted eye is seen
In the crown that encircles the brow of their
queen.

The circle is formed, and the revels begun,
The queen is its centre, and, bright as the sun,
She sits in her floating pavilion of gold,
Her vassals to honour, their sports to behold.
The graver spirits stand round the throne,
And Puck and the Brownies within the zone.

Then oft as the circle sweeps round the hill,
They cheat the most agile fay of his due;
And the mirth and the music grow louder still,
As these elves their sportive pranks pursue.

Winning the queen's approving smile
By quips and cranks, or some whimsical wile;
And raising the laughter loud and high,
Till pale grew each twinkling torch of the sky.

And the little green hunter sounds his horn,
To warn the queen of approaching morn;
Then the porphyry bower is closed again,
On the Fairy Queen and her elfin train.

Doubtest thou, maiden, the truth of my theme?—
These eyes have witnessed the scene—in a dream—
On Fawdon Hill I stood by the thorn,
When the little green hunter sounded his horn;
I saw the spirits encircle the hill,
And their laugh rings in my fancy still.
I sigh'd to shuffle this mortal coil,
And share in their revels, and lighten their toils.
A gentle pressure dissolv'd the charm—
The vision had vanish'd—she hung on my arm.
One sparkling glance from a mortal eye
Banish'd my spiritual ecstacy.

Ah! happier far with that mortal alone
In the flow'ry vale when the breeze was still,
Than to form a link of the glittering zone
That circled the bosom of Fawdon Hill.

THE LEGEND

OF

CUDDY BELL

AND

NANNY OGLE.

(MITFORD.)

"Tall, like the poplar, was his size,
Green, green his waistcoat was, as leeks,
Red, red as beet-root, were his eyes,
Pale, pale as turnips, were his cheeks!"

COLMAN.

The Legend of Cuddy Bell.

THE following Legend is illustrative of the popular opinions and apprehensions that pervaded the minds of almost all classes of society during the early and middle ages; namely, a firm belief in ghosts, hob-goblins, and the whole tribe of white spirits and black, blue spirits and grey, that at will could assume all forms, dilated or condensed, bright or obscure, as the caprice of the moment influenced their spiritual choice. In those times it was customary, during "the piping times of peace," for squires, pages, and not unfrequently grooms and the other retainers that formed the *dramatis personæ* of a baron's retinue, to assemble around the log-fire blazing in the great hall of the castle, after the sports and exercises of the day were ended; and, to while away the tedious hours that intervened between even-fall and night's cheerless noon, they had recourse to story-telling. Local romances, and the most terrific traditionary tales peculiar to the neighbourhood, were eagerly sought after, and attentively listened to, till dread "caused each particular hair to stand erect" upon the heads of the fear-stricken auditors, who would start, even at their own elongated shadows dancing among the rusted swords and lances, stags' horns, and other trophies of the chase, that adorned the vacant spaces

of the smoke-dyed walls of the spacious apartments. Meanwhile the noble flagon and his trusty attendant —yclept Black Jack—were in constant circulation. Yet such are the characteristics that mark an untutored people, that these men in real difficulties evinced an unusual degree of courage and chivalrous enterprise. If the bugle sounded a foray o'er the Border, or announced the approach of the foemen, they hastily sped to the place of rendezvous; and, regardless of danger and reckless of life, they would grapple the enemy with the same alacrity and enthusiasm as evinced by schoolboys on the projected despoliation of a hornet's nest, or the dispersion of predatory rooks from the harvest fields of the husbandman.

The pusillanimous yet valiant Cuddy has a literary companion possessing an analogous character, in the attendant on the Count in Lodoiska, who quaintly observed, when his master ridiculed him for his lack of valour, "I can fight the devil by day-light, but a ghost in the dark is quite a different thing."

'The STANNERS,' mentioned in p. 112, are portions of ground on the margin of the Wansbeck, near to Morpeth. The appellation STANNERS is used provincially to denote those small stones and gravel within the channel of a river, which are occasionally left dry. The word STANNERS is derived from the Gothic STENOER, composed of STEN, *a stone*, and OER, *gravel*.

THE

LEGEND OF CUDDY BELL.

In days of yore, before the birth of order,
When Rapine was the warden of the Border;
When will was law,—craft, wisdom,—and strength, right,—
And the best plea for doing wrong was might!
Those good old times the poets love to paint,
When whip-cord and cold water made a saint,
And turbulence a hero; when the maid
Stabbed her betrayer—if she was betrayed.
Or, if the gentle suitor begged her love,
She sent him to the wars his faith to prove;
When all the honeyed words the lover spoke
Were far less moving than the heads he broke.
Then if he died, or stayed away too long,
The minstrels told his story in a song;
And the fair lady strove her grief to smother
For one true love—by wedding to another!

Ay! these were times indeed—when if a fair one
Had twenty lovers, yet she could not spare one,
But set them in a chamber all together,
Or in the yard (according to the weather);

Armed them with spears or cudgels, as the case was,
Mounted or not, as more or less the space was;
And he who in this struggle stood the longest,
Whose head was thickest or whose arm was strongest,
And best his rivals thumped or hacked pell-mell,
From every crown-cracked champion bore the bell.

Oh! blessed age! oh! dear lamented times!
When theft and homicide were jokes, not crimes;
When burning peels and towns were acts of merit,
And deep revenge became a lad of spirit;
When every eye saw fairies, ghosts, and devils,
Frisk in the moon-beam in their midnight revels.

When Merlay ruled in Morpeth's well-kept castle,
And plundered and protected many a vassal,
Of one of them a fearful tale is told,
Which, if you dare to listen, I'll unfold.
He was a youth of grace in form and manners,
Hight Cuddy Bell—or Cuddy of the Stanners,
A sturdy, home-spun, true Northumbrian yeoman,
Who neither fear'd the devil nor a foeman;
Scotchmen he drubbed, as drubbed St. George the dragon,
And loved *one* woman as he loved a flagon,—
The daughter of the Parish Clerk of Mitford;
I'll sketch her portrait, though she did not sit for 't.

In person just below the middle size,
With dark brown hair, and black and sparkling eyes;

A pretty nose, ripe lips, and ruby cheeks;
That neatness, which a well-turned mind bespeaks,
Graced her plump person—plump?—at least her boddice
Required tight lacing to make Nan a goddess.

One night, when fierce December's drifting snow
Whitened the towers above—the ground below,
When the keen blasts alternate roared and howled,
And thro' the hall strange fire-bronzed shadows scowled,
There, midst the wardens, while the black jack danced
Merrily round, had Cuddy sat entranced,
And still had sat, nor cared to sleep a wink,
While tales were yet to tell, or draughts to drink.
But churlish duty roused at length his hosts
From cup and jest, and tales of blood and ghosts,
And sent them growling to their several posts.
Then forth must Cuddy, right reluctant, hie,
To brave the tender mercies of the sky;
And then—oh then!—to love and Nanny true,
Towards Mitford's town with timeless steps he drew.
Of blood and ghosts, I say, their tales had been,
Of wild shrieks heard and hideous faces seen!
Of forms from new-made graves beheld to rise,
Grim fleshless things that glared with stony eyes!
Of dancing devils, gibbering and grinning
At wights less prone to praying than to sinning;
And elves and spirits that oft, at midnight's hour,
O'er righteous men themselves have fearful power.
No marvel then that Cuddy held his way,
Brimful of horrors, as a rustic may,

And heard a thousand demons in the woods,
And in the Wansbeck's redly rushing floods.
Sore was the conflict, none, methinks, may doubt,
'Twixt ghastly terrors and sublime brown stout.

But when our hero reach'd at length the place
Where the Newminster rear'd its hoary face,
What was his joy to find his Nanny wait,
In such a night, his coming at the gate!
He clasped Nanny gently to his breast,
And fiercely kissed, and boorishly carest.
In vain the tempest work'd its furious will,
The raptured lovers kissed and wander'd still,
And reach'd at length the foot of the dark hill,
On the south bank above the abbey mill;
And just as glared the castle beacon's gleam,
A dread voice thundered from the rushing stream,
And, "Come, Diabolo!" it loudly cried,
And Nanny whisked from Cuddy's shuddering side,
And straight the form, so beautiful before,
A demon's horns, and tail, and talons wore!—
Full in his face she laugh'd with fiendish spite,
And would have torn his eyes out if she might;
But on and fast sped Cuddy like the wind,
And left his phantom sweetheart far behind.
"Oh! Mary! mother!"—thus the frighted swain,
Once in his own rude dwelling safe again,
Roar'd to the Virgin,—"this was kindly parried;
Thank God, I've found her out before we married."

THE LEGEND

OF

PERCY'S CROSS,

A Northumberland Battle Tale.

"I have saved the bird in my breast."

Sir Ralph Percy's dying declaration.

The Legend of Percy's Cross.

THE Battle of Hedgley Moor occupies as prominent a station in the pages of history as does the apocryphal Battle of Chevy Chase in the local legends of the country. All the circumstances connected with the desolating wars between the rival houses of York and Lancaster, so far as they relate to Northumberland, are as "familiar as household terms" to general readers, and have been so abundantly detailed by different writers, that a repetition here would be a work of supererogation. A few brief remarks are only necessary to give the following legend a local name, and to increase the interest of the original tradition by fictitious embellishment. Legitimate history at the best only affords a sort of indistinct light, or what painters term general effect, and which is insufficient of itself, without the aid of conjecture, to illume the dim outline of this and the subsequent battle that immediately followed at Hexham, when the Lancastrians again lost the day, and with it

> "The earthquake voice of victory,
> To *them* the breath of life."

Mr. Wright, in his History of Hexham, observes, that "no legend points out the scene of action, and historians differ so widely, that it is yet a pertinent question—where was the Battle of Hexham fought?"

From the *known* incidents connected with the Battle of Hedgley Moor, it may be inferred to have been a sanguinary struggle; indeed, the very circumstance of a Percy conducting the enterprise sufficiently strengthens the hypothesis. There was business of the most stern and uncompromising nature to enact when a Percy took the field. The very name almost commanded success, and could calm into obedience the most turbulent spirits on the English borders, or rouse them into untameable excitement.

His was the name that oft hath cast
Terror when given to the blast;
His was the charger when the tide
Of purple strife rolled far and wide;
When vengeful blades were thickest flashing,
Ever was seen in fury dashing!—
Where havock's fiend was wildest raving,
Ever his dreaded plume was waving!
Where the yell and shout were loudest,
Ever his banner soared the proudest!—
His was the name that many a hill
And Scottish glen remember still;
When the bugle's blast, and the ban-dog's howl,
Scared the turreted raven and owl;
And shrieks below, and fires on high
Reddened the troubled and startled sky,
Told Caledon's sons the foe was nigh.—
A foe! who deemed not aught was done,
Till all were fled and all was won;
Who knew not parley nor retreat,
Till the work of victory was complete!

Vide Service's Reminiscences.

Sir Ralph Percy was the only nobleman of the red-rose party who preserved the sanctity of his vow inviolate to Henry, and "the bird in his breast" sacred to his own honour; and who, when basely deserted by Lords Hungerford and Ross, obstinately maintained his ground to the last gasp, and "foremost fighting fell" among the bravest of the brave. To him may be applied these lines of Milton:—

——————————— "Faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he;
Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
Nor number, nor example, with him wrought,
To swerve from truth, or sway his constant mind,
Though single."

THE

LEGEND OF PERCY'S CROSS.

"FAIR morn betide thee, sire of this lonely glen,
"Fair morn betide thee, why stopp'st thou me?"
Up spoke the father then,
"Chief! in this lolely glen,
"Through the dark night hours I've tarried for thee.

"Chief! to the battle plain spur not thy charger,
"Far be from Hedgley thy pennon and plume!
"A vision comes o'er me,
"Hosts gather before me,
"The mighty rush on—but they rush to the tomb."

"Ho gallants! a Seer!" quoth the Lord of the crescent then,
"Knight and squire, page and groom, reck ye the rede?
"The voice of a stranger
"Warns PERCY from danger,
"Fly, fly we like cravens—spur palfrey and steed!"

"Ha!" cried the wizard then, "spurnest thou my
counsel?
"Yet again, and but once, list the voice thou hast
scorned,
"Trust not the Ross's word,
"Shun the dark Hungerford,
"Fly the proud Montacute—Chief! thou art warned."

"On," said the PERCY, "and heed not the dreamer,
"Burst like a storm on the rebels' array!
"Accurst be the omen
"Parts foeman from foeman,
"Stout hearts for the red roses!—spur and away!"

Darkly they serried their lines on the desert heath,
Darkly they closed, and the battle raged high;
Rung on the sighing gale
Many a dying wail;
Steel clash'd on hauberk—shafts darken'd the sky.

Many a goodly steed masterless galloped there,
Many a rider lay reeking in gore,
Many a bloody hand
Plied the red bill and brand,
Many a knight fell to rise never more!

Chieftains on chieftains rush—lo! where the proud-
est fight,
Whose barb through the phalanx bounds fearless
and first—

In his banner far streaming
The crescent is gleaming,
And fiercely his bands through the serried links burst.

Ha! quenched is the crescent's light—lo! where he bleeding lies!
True were the words he recklessly braved;
Mark ye his glazing eye,
List ye his dying cry!
"Triumph! the bird in my bosom I've saved."

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

PERCY'S CROSS is a pillar commemorative of the death of SIR RALPH PERCY, who was killed at the Battle of Hedgley Moor, in one of the contests between the Yorkists and Lancastrians in the year 1463, when nearly all the vassal population of Northumberland were destroyed. The cross stands in a field on the east side of the road leading from Morpeth to Wooler, and at a short distance to the north of the 21st milestone. The arms of Percy and Lucy and other heraldic insignia are rudely sculptured on the four sides

——————— Of the dark grey stone,
Now shattered by time and rugged grown,
Memorial of deeds gone by,
Yet woos the passing wanderer's eye—
Lone vestige of the mighty past!
  Upreared by long-sepulchred hands,
Like monarch old in exile cast,
  In ruined majesty it stands—
Casting an aspect of the tomb,
A shade of monumental gloom,
O'er the rude heath, that far and wide,
  (As travellers' weary eye may ken),
Scarce shews a trace of human pride—
  A distant residence of men.

'Tis sculptured with devices o'er,
And mottoes of the brave of yore;
But there time's wasting breath hath been,
And the winter winds of heaven keen,
And the tempest's rush and the drenching rain,
That will not beat for an age in vain,
Mouldering the artist's toil away,
Wasting all in slow decay.
'Tis of the PERCY'S deathless fame,
That dark grey Cross remains to tell;
It bears the PERCY'S honoured name,
For near its base the PERCY fell.
And there, when evening's shadows brown,
Dark Hedgley, on thy heath sank down,
Oft have I lingered, till the gale,
That died in murmurs faint away,
Seemed laden with a feeble wail,
O'er that lone relic worn and grey.
And oft imagination's eye,
Dim through the mist could there descry
Dark shadowy forms careering by;
Each wielding in its cloudy hand
The semblance of a spear or brand,
As if the spirits of the brave,
Who found on Hedgley Moor their grave,
To mourn above the vestige came,
That bears their chieftain's honoured name.

Vide Service's Reminiscences.

THE LEGEND

OF

SHEWIN' SHIELS;

OR,

CUDDY O' THE STEEL.

(HEXHAMSHIRE.)

"Season your admiration for a while,
With an attent ear, till I may deliver
Upon the witness of these same pages,
This marvel to you."

SHEWIN' SHIELS lies on the western extremity of Warden parish, in Tynedale Ward. Its castle is in ruins, and is "as solitary a spot as sorrow can desire." Popular tradition says that King Arthur and his court are enchanted near the ruins of Shewin' Shiels Castle, in the "cavern of the *enchanted warriors*," to which the following legend owes its existence. To this cognomen should be appended the sub-title of the "Seven Sleepers," which is generally done by the best story-tellers in "the north countrie." Camden mistook this place for the station of HUNNUM, "but," says Horsley, "I saw nothing that was Roman in it."

The Legend of Shewin' Shiels.

THIS Legend bears a strong resemblance in shape and feature to the memorable fable of the Seven Sleepers, mentioned by Gibbon, in his History of the Roman Empire, which is as follows:—

"When the Emperor Decius persecuted the Christians, seven noble youths of Ephesus concealed themselves in a spacious cavern in the side of an adjacent mountain, where they were doomed to perish by the tyrant, who gave orders that the entrance should be firmly secured by a pile of large stones. They immediately fell into a deep slumber, which was miraculously prolonged, without injuring the powers of life, during a period of 187 years. At the end of that time, the slaves of Adolius, to whom the inheritance of the mountain had descended, removed the stones to supply materials for some rustic edifice. The light of the sun darted into the cavern, and the Seven Sleepers were permitted to awake, after a slumber, as they thought, of a few hours. They were pressed by the calls of hunger; and resolved that Jamblichus, one of their number, should secretly return to the city to purchase bread for the use of his companions. The youth (if we may still employ the appellation) could no longer recognise the once familiar aspect of his native country, and his surprise was increased by the appearance of a large cross triumphantly erected over the principal gate of

Ephesus. His singular dress and obsolete language confounded the baker, to whom he offered an ancient medal of Decius, as the current coin of the empire; and Jamblichus, on the suspicion of a secret treasure, was dragged before the judge. Their mutual inquiries produced the amazing discovery, that two centuries were almost elapsed since Jamblichus and his friends had escaped from the rage of a pagan tyrant. The Bishop of Ephesus, the clergy, the magistrates, the people, and, it is said, the Emperor Theodosius himself, hastened to visit the cavern of the Seven Sleepers, who bestowed their benediction, related their story, and at the same instant peaceably expired."

The historian gives the following reflections on this celebrated legend:—"We imperceptibly advance from youth to age without observing the gradual, but incessant, change of human affairs; and, even in our larger experience of history, the imagination is accustomed by a perpetual series of causes and effects, to unite the most distant revolutions. But if the interval between two memorable eras be instantly annihilated; if it were possible, after a momentary slumber of 200 years, to display the *new* world to the eyes of a spectator, who still retained a lively and recent impression of the *old*, his surprise and his reflections would furnish the pleasing subject of a philosophical romance."

The Northumberland Squire, Cuddy, when he awoke from his unconscious slumber of "seven long hundred years," and found himself again a sentient being, his astonishment would not be less vehement than was that of Jamblichus, the youth of Ephesus.

THE

LEGEND OF SHEWIN' SHIELS.

In days of yore, those good and golden days,
Which all who know them not so warmly praise,
When Tynedale loved to harry Scotland's goods,
And gave their matrons "light to set their hoods,"
There was, and is, in Hexhamshire a spot,
No matter if remembered or forgot,
'Twas bosom'd then 'midst forests, moors, and plains,
Mountains untrack'd, and roads, or rather lanes,
Of rare occurrence—deep, and wet, and muddy,
Winding through swampy bog, or covert woody,
To where a lordly castle grimly frown'd
O'er a few turf-built huts that huddled round
The moated wall, as if they fear'd the lower
And sullen shadow of the dungeon tower;
Or to the quiet vale and cultured glade,
Where peaceful churchmen had their dwellings made.
But these green spots were rare—the hardy heather
Supplied the place of corn and grass together;
Houses and weapons, clothes, and fire, and food,
Were all afforded by the neighbouring wood;
The healthy churl, in undressed deer-skin fine,
Counted with conscious pride his herds of swine;—

Where are they now?—alas! the herdsman's fled,
The only *pigs* we breed are *pigs* of lead!

But to our tale.—Our hero was a squire,
One of the church's tenants in the shire,
The owner of a solitary peel,
From which men called him "Cuddy o' the Steel."
His friends confessed, and foes were made to feel,
That Steel was steel indeed from head to heel;
He had the iron virtues of his time,
Its ignorance, and something of its crime.

One night the wind bore on its hollow swell
The booming notes of Hexham's Abbey bell,—
That bell which, to the neighbourhood's dismay,
Rang out the tidings of a threatened fray.
Red blazed the beacon's light on Hexham fell,
And Warden to the signal answered well:
Dilston heard Beaufront wind his mellow horn,
Aydon to rouse, and Halton tower to warn;
And pale the fire light was reflected back
From baron's helm and yeoman's burnished jack;
And spear and corslet, targe and brand, and glave,
Returned the fire the fierce red light it gave;
As troop on troop, in broad and sweeping line,
Dash'd their proud steeds across the roaring Tyne.
And broader yet the beacon glare was flung,—
And deeper yet each turret's 'larum rung!
Here peal'd a horn,—there neighed a startled steed—
A Ratcliffe here was roared, and there a Reed—

A Tyndale—Fenwick—Ridley—or a Bell;
And echo paid them back from Acomb Fell,
Where many a Scottish slogan fiercely rose,
Telling the name and number of the foes.
On Fallowfield or plain, in mad career,
The Scot met Tynedale glittering spear to spear!

But why the tale of battle thus pursue?
(A tale of blood like modern Waterloo)—
'Tis with the Squire alone we have to do!
Cuddy was wounded; on the ground he lay,—
Was seized at length, and swiftly borne away—
He knew not when, nor whether, nor by whom,
But woke at last within a stately room
Cut from the solid rock, with seats around,
On each of which a sleeping knight lay bound!
He counted seven in green-wood mantles drest,
With knightly spur on heel, and chain on breast;
He tried in vain to wake them, one or all;
A horn and sword were hung upon the wall;
Cuddy approach'd, when, from the eastern side,
A mystic voice in hollow accents cried,
"Forbear!" "For whom?" cried Cuddy at the word,
And laid his dauntless hand upon the sword,
And half unsheath'd the blade.—The chamber rung—
Up from their beds the seven green sleepers sprung,
And seven keen swords were gleaming at his breast.
Cuddy, with wonder more than fear oppressed,
Dropt from his hand the sword and seized the horn,
And blew a blast his distant friends to warn.

The champions sink—the chamber melts away—
And Cuddy finds himself in open day—
Alive—uninjured—for his wound he feels,—
'Tis gone! he views the crags of Shewin' Shiels,
And recollects the tale of Arthur's knights,
And trembles as he thinks upon the sights
Just vanished in that fair and fairy hall,
The seven green sleepers and the magic call!
He crossed himself, and blessed the gracious hour
That snatched him timely from enchantment's power!

'Twas dawn before the battle's heat was done,
And now he sees the scarcely risen sun—
Sir Cuddy thought—but, judge of his surprise,
When to his wild and wonder-stricken eyes
Appeared the country new and very strange,
He wist not how to reconcile the change—
Corn fields, and gardens; houses, neat and strong,
No woods, no mosses—as he trudged along
Upon a road so beautiful and broad—
What could he think?—he felt his spirits awed!
The fairies had thrown glamour o'er his eyes,
And all he saw gave more and more surprise!
Men looked not like the men that he had seen,
They spake another language—and *his* mien
Appear'd to move *their* wonder.—On he came,
But still he found no single scene the same,
Nought as it was before—the rushing river
Indeed swept on as beautiful as ever,

The hills stood still—the valleys kept their places—
But glens and dales alike had changed their faces.
He crossed the Tyne by a superior bridge,
And saw a rail-way climb the mountain ridge;
He entered Hexham, passing Quatre Bras,
And grew the more amazed the more he saw.
He knew not on what point his thoughts to fix,
When Eighteen Hundred—lo! and twenty-six
Before his eyes in capitals appears!—
Why he had slept full seven long hundred years!

Well might he see a change in all things round!
Well might this new—old world his brain confound!
In his young days men strove to warm the *heart*,
But now the *head* seem'd thought the better part.
The laughing fair ones of our modern days,
He swore, indeed, were past all power of praise,
But wish'd himself, whene'er he named the men,
Asleep for seven long hundred years again!

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTE 1, P. 130, L. 17, &c.

Dilston heard Beaufront wind his mellow horn,
Aydon to rouse, and Halton tower to warn.

Dilston stands conspicuously on the south side of the Tyne; and it is said that the inhabitants of Dilston and Beaufront were wont to inform each other of any important news by the use of a speaking trumpet. This is more probable than the trumpet of the Roman wall.

Beaufront, long the seat of the Errington family, is an elegant mansion, standing in a commanding yet sheltered situation on the northern bank of Tyne, about two miles below Hexham. Few places make a finer appearance or enjoy a wider or more cultivated prospect than this.

Halton Tower, the seat of the Haltons, afterwards of the Carnabies, and lastly of the Blacketts. It is a strong old seat, with turrets at its four corners, and commands a good prospect. An ancient sword of the Carnabies, 64 inches long, is preserved at Halton, which is the site of the Roman station HUNNUM.

Aydon Castle stands on the west side of a deep dell, and appears to have been a place of great size and strength. The heiress of the last Aydon of Aydon was married by Edward I. to Peter de Wallis.

Note 2, P. 131, L. 5.

On Fallowfield or plain.

Fallowfield stands on an eminence between Wall and Acomb. Here is the "*written crag*," on which is inscribed in legible and deep letters "PETRA FLAVI CARANTINI,—*the Crag of Flavus Carantinus.*

THE LEGEND

OF

HOB O' THE STOB HILL.

(MORPETH.)

"An ancient story I'll tell you anon,
Of a notable prince that was called king John;
And he ruled England with main and with might,
For he did great wrong, and maintained little right."

King John and the Abbot of Canterbury.

Hob o' the Stob Hill is a tradition of Morpeth in the olden time, during the reign of king John, when the whole kingdom became a prey to disorder and convulsions of every kind. Neither life, property, nor freedom could be secured by law. The nobles were dreadfully oppressed, and made for a length of time little pretensions to any rights; and the vassals, having nothing to lose, adopted the compendious and

> ——— "Simple plan,
> That they should take, who have the power,
> And they should keep, who can."

The Northumberland barons had recourse to Alexander II. king of Scotland, for protection against king John; and, in order to obtain it, they did homage to Alexander at Felton. King John, in resentment of the defection of the barons, advanced to the borders; and, amongst other places, reduced Wark, in Northumberland, to ashes. Camden states that Morpeth was set on fire by the inhabitants themselves, to prejudice John, who would have rested here in his infamous expedition.

HOB O' THE STOB HILL.

I've said, and say again, that they who praise,
With such inveterate glee, the good old days,
Are somewhat apt in prejudice to wander,
And treat the present age with less than candour;
But for *his* reason should you press your poet,
Hark to his tale, *that* probably will shew it!

Have you, sir, seen a comet?—yes!—she shines
Exactly with the lustre of these lines;
No head, nor fountain of her light, we find,
But she's extremely luminous behind!
So if my story's dark at first—the rhyme
Will sparkle now—and then blaze forth in time,
Spreading around new light on times gone by—
On tales once famed in Border Minstrelsie!

Morpeth's good town *is*—just as you may know it;
But as it *was*—the histories don't shew it;
My Legend *will*—'tis local—and 'tis true,
A point that more concerns myself than you,
And how I came by it will prove it such,
Being taken—that is stolen—from the Hutch,
Which all the corporation deeds are held in,
As old and as obscure as Meg o' Meldon!—
A huge and ugly oak-and-iron box,
They keep up stairs, secured by seven vast locks;
But what are locks to antiquarian fingers?
A hint's enough—meanwhile my story lingers.

King John, it seems, had made a desperate kick-up,
And the whole nation reel'd and had the hickup;
Now what they quarrel'd for, it matters not,
We care not now, nor did they then one jot;
On one side stood the king, and on the other
Was the Lord Morpeth and his younger brother.
In those hot days it was a sort of fashion,
That whatsoe'er the landlord chose to dash on,
The tenant followed, were it for good or evil—
"Go on, I follow—be it to the devil!"
And not a vassal dared his leader's steps shun,
A general rule, but there was one exception.
Hob o' the Stob Hill, simpleton by rule,
And *wise* enough, at least, to *seem* a fool,
Took, as few wiser men had ever done,
A witty way to cherish *number one!*
Such beings *were* and *are*—who can dispense,
A pound of sound, with half a grain of sense;
Sages look queer, and stranged how instinct can
So well supply the place of *mind* in man!—

Hob had a wife, one of those gentle dearies
Who rule with rod of iron—whose chief fear is
Not to be fear'd—who at the altar say,
"*I will command*" for "*honour and obey.*"
Now Hobby's was a ticklish situation;
The king commanded him, with half the nation,
To join the royal banner,—and his lord
Bade Hob against the king to draw his sword;
His wife, with voice as terrible as either,
Cried, "draw thy sword, I charge thee, Hob, for neither."
"*Right!*" said the king—"*left!*" cried the baron,—"*halt!*"
Roar'd the domestic tyrant,—Hob at fault

Scratch'd his shock head, and rolled his eyes, and cried,
" There's but ae way to please them aw,"—and died.
Such accidents were not much heeded then;
The king and baron, both in want of men,
Desired the mourning widow out of hand
To furnish one for each, or lose the land.
In those days, would you think it? ladies' money
Could make a bitter bargain sweet as honey.
So Hobby's widow found a match, and he
Went as a trooper to the king,—while she
In Hobby's jack, and armed with good broad-sword,
Mounted the one-eyed mare, and joined her lord!—
" Meg," said the amazon, " keep ye the hoose,
" Look to the cows, and watch the cleckin goose;
" And, for poor Hobby, tyek the silly creature
" On your strang back, and fling him i' the water."

Away she sallied, and to do the job
Maggie approached; when, lo! up started Hob,
Capering as though death had but made him stronger,
And swore he had but died to live the longer;
Free from his fears, and severed from his wife,
He hoped to lead a semi-joyous life.
Alas! how vain are human hopes! the king
Threatened on Morpeth fire and sword to bring.
Then stood the town on t'other side the river,
And the lord's bailiff then was the land giver;
He caused the freemen, as the king came down,
To save their lives, and sacrifice the town.
The patriot freemen quickly fired their houses,
And on their backs bore off their goods and spouses.
Hobby excepted!—he, with wiser aim,
Struggled to save his cottage from the flame,

And kindly offered to his brother freemen,
Ransom for all their goods, except their women.
Not to digress,—this ne'er was his intent,
He took them as a *Morpeth compliment!*
What that phrase means, authorities don't tell us,
But Hob's words may,—said he, "maw canny fellows,
"Ye knaw that aw was buckled wiv a marrow,
"That kept me like a tyed belaw a harrow,
"A naggy, stupid, fuilish, yammerin howdie,
"A parfit bison, and a huel for crowdie;
"She gav me nowt i' plenty but her tongue,
"O' that a *Morpeth compliment* she flung.
"My lord, aw wad na flickered at his order,
"Was't for a raid or foray o'er the border;
"But yens awn sells to whack at yen another,
"I see nae gude in't;—then to join the tother,
"Aw mean the king,—maw certes! when maw wife
"In maw awn breeks had met me i' the strife,
"She wad hae whumbled me and ta'en maw life.
"Ye brainless culls, ye set the town a-lowe,
"And what I saved, ye wad hae frae me now,
"But tyek whe likes, and let him keep whe can,
"Maw part is aye to play the canny man!
"Yer aw wise beggars—aw's a cull—but, hark!
"A wealthy fuil outweighs a hungry clerk;
"Ye die to live in story—when aw died,
"It was to live wi' peace abuin maw head;
"And when yer story's tell'd in efter day,
"Ye maunna think to carry a' the praise,
"For on this spot six hunder years hereafter,
"Clusters o' bonny lassies, wi' loud laughter,
"And witching smiles, shall praise the canny skill
"And *living death* o' Hob o' the Stob Hill!"

THE LEGEND

OF

PAULINUS.

(HOLYSTONE.)

"Better converse whole ages with the dead,
Pore on a broken marble to retrieve
A single letter of a good man's name,
Than spend one moment with deceit and vice."
Sewell's Tragedy of Sir Walter Raleigh.

PAULINUS is distinguished as the first apostle of Christianity to the Northumbrians. Whilst Paganism prevailed in Northumberland, Edwin, the king of that country, about the year 625, espoused Edelberga, the daughter of Ethelbert, king of Kent, who had been converted to Christianity by the monk Augustus, about thirty years before. Edelberga was permitted to enjoy the free exercise of her religion, in which Edwin expressed a wish to be instructed. But though the arguments of Paulinus were enforced by the entreaties of the queen, Edwin hesitated to embrace Christianity till he had consulted his faithful Wittena. The council ended in the public acceptance of the new religion, and even Coifi, the high priest of Northumberland, became a zealous convert. The motive that induced Coifi to renounce idolatry was singular. "No one," he said, "had served the gods more assiduously than himself, and yet few had been less fortunate. He was weary of deities who were so indifferent or so ungrateful, and would willingly try his fortune under the new religion." Edwin shewed himself a warm patron to Paulinus, who prosecuted his missionary labours with great zeal and success. Bede relates that whilst Paulinus attended the king and queen at one of their royal manors, called Adgebrin, he was occupied thirty-six days in instructing the people, who flocked to him from all the neighbouring places, and afterwards baptizing them in the river Glen. Camden conjectures, from the similarity of the names and the propinquity to the river Glen, that Adgebrin was situated where Yeverin now stands. The tradition with respect to Holystone evidently refers to an event in the ministry of Paulinus different from that mentioned by Bede. Indeed, the name of *Pallinsburn*, (the seat of Adam Askew, Esq.), by which a township in Northumberland is to this day known, clearly indicates that the hallowing distinction of being the scene of the performance of one of our religious rites by him who was its first minister among our ancestors, was shared by other places than that noticed by Bede.

THE

LEGEND OF PAULINUS.

Of all the mighty chiefs that sleep
Beneath green Cheviot's sunny steep,
With whose renown the vales have rung
For ages—*One* remains unsung.
Daughter of the mountains!*—long
Cheviot's echoes mock'd her song,
Brawling by the silent hill,
Where all things, save herself, were still.
Her rocky fetters felt no more,
She whirls along a pebbly shore;
Discursive o'er the meadows straying,
Or a crescent sweep displaying;
Expanding now with mimic waves,
Slow the shelving bank she laves,
Then glides along until her course
Obstructed, with collected force
Resistless bursts her roaring way!
By wooded crags and ruins grey
Of Brinkburn—Coquet's Islet green—
And Warkworth's fairy Vale unseen;
Down the dell of Lanternside—
(Where monuments of Roman pride

* Coquet.

Oft the wand'rer's eye surpris'd,
'Mid nature's beauties dearer priz'd),
A foaming torrent pours its force,
Urging on its erring course,
In haste to swell Young Coquet's tide—
(Thy rugged brow, dark Simonside,
Frowns o'er their waters mingling); nigh
The trophies of a warrior lie.
Deep hidden 'mid the moorlands rude,
Encircled by a little wood—
Spreads a glassy fountain pure,
A mountain lake in miniature.
Its waters once, the peasants tell,
Supplied the Benedictine cell;
(Those ruin'd walls with moss o'ergrown,
The convent of the Holy Stone),
Where the sisters wont to dwell,
Whence its name "The Ladies' Well." *
Erected here by pious hands,
The statue of Paulinus stands,
The church's champion, ages past,
When Thor and Woden stood aghast
Before the soldiers of the Lord,
Armed with the weapons of his word.
God's spirit moved these waters then
To cleanse the sin-stain'd souls of men.
Yes, little fountain! proudly spring,
While thy streamlet's murmuring

---

* The *Ladies' Well*, a remarkably pure spring, near the village of *Holystone*, is distinguished as the spot where *Paulinus*, an English Bishop, in the 7th century, baptized 3000 Danish and Saxon converts.

Brings before the wand'rer's eye,
Forms and scenes long, long gone by.
Inspired, upon thy little strand,
Fancy sees Paulinus stand;
Before him, on the swelling green,
The Saxon youths and maidens, lean,
Graceful kirtles half concealing,
Half their beauteous forms revealing,
O'er their sun-burnt shoulders bare,
Easy flows their yellow hair;
And their mild blue eyes express
Innocence and happiness.
The space beneath the rising hill,
The aged and the matrons fill.
A warrior train upon the ground
Lie, a raven standard round—
And another armed band
By a snowy courser stand.
Shatter'd mail and splinter'd spear
Strew the plain, yet there appear
No traces of a bloody fray—
No! for this bright auspicious day
Saw the Christian soldier wield
The sword of Faith—and win the field—
Between contending hosts unfurl
THE BANNER OF THE CROSS! and hurl
Fierce Woden from his scythed car.
HIS vot'ries wage a nobler war—
Truth upon his forehead gleaming,
In his eyes devotion beaming,
"His lips a parent's love expressing,"
Pour the apostolic blessing,

And divine instruction's ray—
Whither, Fancy, wouldst thou stray?
The inspiration of that hour
Acknowledges a holier pow'r.
The red-hair'd race of Lochlin, late
The Angles view'd with deadly hate;
United, now, the kindred bands,
Brothers, join their plighted hands;
Glad tidings eagerly receive,
And, with soften'd hearts, believe.
Loud the song of triumph raise,
Grateful sound the victor's praise,
Who, this day, with unstain'd sword,
Won three thousand to the Lord!
Deathless wreaths the poets twine
For blood-flush'd brows—yet, worth like thine
A humbler garland, meek, receives
Of wild flowers, which the wand'rer weaves,
Flowers that only spring to-day,
And ere to-morrow fade away;
Yet shall they, around thy tomb,
In perennial beauty bloom.
Yes, pure font, to thee 'twas given
To seal the Covenant of Heaven!
Wherefore, noise and tumult fly
The precincts of thy sanctuary.

THE

LAIDLEY WORM

OF

SPINDLESTON HEUGH.

(BAMBURGH.)

BY DUNCAN FRASIER,

THE OLD MOUNTAIN BARD, LIVING ON CHEVIOT, A. D. 1270.

"Virgo jam serpens sinuosa volumina versat,
Mille trahens varios adverso sole colores,
Arrectisque horret squamis, et sibilat ore,
Arduaque insurgens navem de littore pulsat."

THE

LAIDLEY WORM.

THE king is gone from Bamburgh Castle,
Long may the princess mourn;
Long may she stand on the castle wall,
Looking for his return.

She has knotted the keys upon a string,
And with her she has them ta'en:
She has cast them o'er her left shoulder,
And to the gate she is gane.

She tripped out, she tripped in,
She tript into the yard:
But it was more for the king's sake,
Than for the queen's regard.

It fell out on a day, the king
Brought the queen with him home;
And all the lords in our country,
To welcome them did come.

Oh! welcome father, the lady cries,
Unto our halls and bowers;
And so are you, my step-mother,
For all that's here is yours.

A lord said, wondering while she spake,
The princess of the north

Surpasses all of female kind,
In beauty, and in worth.

The envious queen replied, at least,
You might have excepted me;
In a few hours I will her bring
Down to a low degree.

I will her liken to a laidley worm,
That wraps about the stone:
And not, till Childe Wynd * comes back,
Shall she again be won.

The princess stood at the bower door,
Laughing, who could her blame?
But e'er the next day's sun went down,
A long worm she became.

For seven miles east, and seven miles west,
And seven miles north and south,
No blade of grass or corn could grow,
So venomous was her mouth.

The milk of seven stately cows,
(It was costly her to keep),
Was brought her daily, which she drank
Before she went to sleep.

At this day may be seen the cave,
Which held her folded up;
And the stone trough, the very same,
Out of which she did sup.

---

* There is now a street called Wynd, at Bamburgh.

Word went east, and word went west,
And word is gone over the sea;
That a laidley worm in Spindleston Heugh
Would ruin the north country.

Word went east, and word went west,
And over the sea did go;
The Childe of Wynd got wit of it,
Which filled his heart with woe.

He called straight his merry men all,
They thirty were and three;
I wish I was at Spindleston,
This desperate worm to see.

We have no time now here to waste,
Hence quickly let us sail:
My only sister Margaret,
Something, I fear, doth ail.

They built a ship without delay,
With masts of rown-tree;
With fluttering sails of silk so fine,
And set her on the sea.

They went on board, the wind with speed
Blew them along the deep;
At length they spied a huge square tower
On a rock high and steep.

The sea was smooth, the weather clear,
When they approached nigher,
King Ida's castle they well knew,
And the banks of Bamburghshire.

The queen look'd out at her bower window,
To see what she could see;
There she espied a gallant ship,
Sailing upon the sea.

When she beheld the silken sails,
Full glancing in the sun;
To sink the ship she sent away,
Her witch wives every one.

The spells were vain. The hags returned
To the queen in sorrowful mood,
Crying that witches have no power
Where there is rown-tree wood.

Her last effort, she sent a boat,
Which in the haven lay,
With armed men to board the ship,
But they were driven away.

The worm leapt up, the worm leapt down,
She plaited round the stone;
And aye as the ship came to the land,
She banged it off again.

The Childe then ran, out of her reach,
The ship on Budley-sand;
And jumping into the shallow sea,
Securely got to land.

And now he drew his berry broad-sword,
And laid it on her head;
And swore if she did harm to him,
That he would strike her dead.

Oh! quit thy sword, and bend thy bow,
And give me kisses three;
For though I am a poisonous worm,
No hurt I'll do to thee.

Oh! quit thy sword, and bend thy bow,
And give me kisses three;
If I'm not won ere the sun go down,
Won I shall never be.

He quitted his sword, and bent his bow,
And gave her kisses three;
She crept into a hole a worm,
But out stept a lady.

No clothing had this lady fine,
To keep her from the cold;
He took his mantle from him about,
And round her did it fold.

He has taken his mantle from him about,
And in it he wrapt her in,
And they are up to Bamburgh Castle,
As fast as they can win.

His absence and her serpent shape,
The king had long deplor'd,
He now rejoic'd to see them both,
Again to him restor'd.

The queen they wanted, whom they found
All pale, and sore afraid;
Full well she knew her power must yield
To Childe Wynd's, who said;

Woe be to thee, thou wicked witch,
An ill death mayest thou dee;
As thou my sister hast likened,
So likened thou shalt be.

I will turn you into a toad,
That on the ground doth wend;
And won, won thou shalt never be
Till this world hath an end.

Now on the sand, near Ida's tower,
She crawls a loathsome toad,
And venom spits on every maid,
She meets upon the road.

The virgins all of Bamburgh town,
Will swear that they have seen
This spiteful toad of monstrous size,
Whilst walking they have been.

All folks believe within the shire,
This story to be true,
And they all run to Spindleston,
The cave and trough to view.

This fact now Duncan Frasier,
Of Cheviot, sings in rhyme;
Lest Bamburghshire men should forget
Some part of it in time.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

LAIDLEY WORM, that is, loathly or loathsome worm, is synonymous with dragon, and was used by the old poets with much license. All nations have their tales of fabulous monsters, under whose horrible appetite, enormous proportion, and obliquity of movement, they have been poetically shadowed forth as the great scourges of the people, or the loathsome pests of distinguished families.

The *worm* or serpent was a frequent and favourite simile with the old English authors. In Shakespeare, "the *worm* is a *good worm*, sir," says the fellow who sells the asp to Charmina. "The *worm* that's fled hath nature, which in time may venom breed." And he speaks of slander's tongue as outvenoming "all the *worms* of Nile." Lydgate's description of a serpent is a personification of the bad passions of human nature:—

> "Her taile burled with scales of silver sheen,
> "The venom was so piercing and so keene.
> "The worthy knight Parthonolope
> "Was the first that happened for to see
> "This hideous serpent, by a river side,
> "Great and horrible, stern, and full of pride."

The history of Saint George and the Dragon was formerly in high repute; and though it is evidently apocryphal, yet in all probability there formerly existed an orthodox saint of that name. The equestrian figure worn by the Knights of the Garter has been supposed to be an emblem of the Christian

warrior in his spiritual armour vanquishing the Old Serpent—the Devil. The champion saint of England is thus described in his infancy:—

"Fair as the sweetest flower of spring,
Such was his infant mien;
And on his little body stamp'd,
Three wondrous marks were seen.

A blood-red cross was on his arm,
A Dragon on his breast,
A little garter all of gold
Was round his leg express'd."

Mr. G. A. Stevens thus enumerates the popular attributes of Saint George of England:—

"He invented life's balsam and golden elixir,
And conquered a Dragon as fierce as Old Nick, sir,
From forestallers, that means, he gave Albion relief;
First brew'd good October, and roasted fat beef."

Thus the good deeds of saints, as well as the evil deeds of sinners, become metamorphosed into supernatural gifts or infernal monsters; and, by the popularity of such disguises, live in the memory, and come down by tradition.

In Spenser's "Faerie Queen," we have an allegory (a kindred subject to Saint George) of a lady suing for the service of a knight to deliver her royal parents from falling a prey to a monstrous dragon,—an enemy sufficiently formidable, since in his destructive powers are pictured the ravages of the great enemy of mankind. The Christian knight (holiness) armed with spiritual armour, with ready zeal sets out with the gentle Una and her little dwarf, where they discover, "within the navel of a wood," the monster error, the prototype of Milton's sin, over which the knight gains a complete victory, after many fears on the part of the lady, and deeds of valour performed by her devoted champion.

A similar adventure is related in the Legend of King Regner Lodbrog, a sea-rover of Denmark, who signalized his youth by an exploit of gallantry. A Swedish prince had a beautiful daughter, whom he intrusted to the care of one of his officers. The officer fell in love with his ward, and detained her in spite of all the efforts of her father. Regner accomplished her deliverance, and obtained her hand in marriage as a reward for his achievement. The name of the discourteous officer was Orme, which, in the Icelandic language, signifies *serpent*. Wherefore the Scalds, to give a more poetical turn to the adventure, represent the lady as detained from her father by a dreadful dragon!

The ocean-snake of the Northmen was not more fully believed in by the writers of the Edda, than was the land-snake of the old Northumbrians.

There is also a popular legend relating to the Lambton family, in the county of Durham, according to which, no chief of the Lambtons should die on his bed for seven or, by some accounts, nine generations, (a commutation which to a martial spirit had probably nothing very terrible), simply because it was a Lambton who succeeded in banishing the snake or worm (the oppressor) from his father-land. At first he was foiled in his encounters with the monster, by the power it possessed of re-union; eventually he added policy to courage, and clothed himself with a coat of mail covered with blades of the sharpest steel, a sort of sithe armour. He placed himself on a crag in the river, and waited the serpent's arrival. It came at the usual time, and wound itself with great fury round the armed knight, and was cut

in pieces by its own efforts, whilst the stream washed away the several parts, and prevented the possibility of re-union.

Lydgate's knight used an arrow to kill his dragon with:—

> "And in all haste he bent a sturdy bow,
> And therein set an arrow filed keene,
> And through the body, spotted blue and green,
> Full mightily he made it for to glide."

Childe Wynd, however, had magical assistance to accomplish his task. There was, at Bamburgh or Bibbanburgh, a maiden who was transformed into a stone, which is still remaining at the foot of the castle, to wound him who has the obstinacy to run against it. And it was doomed that Childe Wynd was the only knight and "genuine imp of Chivalrie" to whom was given the power of counteracting the charmed one's enchantments.

Chaucer describes Bamburgh as the place to which his Constance was driven by the Soudonnesse, in "The Man of Lawe's Tale."

> "She driveth forth unto one Oecian,
> Throughout the wild see, tyl at the laste
> Under han holde, that nempne I na can;
> For in Northumberlond the wave her cast,
> And in the sande her shyppe styked so faste,
> That thence noide it not of all a tyde,
> The will of Christ was that she shud ther abyde.
> The Constable of the Castle down is fare
> To sene this wreck, and all the shyp he sought
> And found this merry woman full of care.
>
> The Constable and dame Hermegilde his wife
> Were paynems in that country every where,
> But Hermegilde loved her right as her lyfe,
> And Constance hath so long sojourned there,
> In orisons with many a bytter tear,
> Tyl Jesus hath converted through his grace
> Dame Hermegilde Constablesse of that place.

In all that lond dursten no christen route,
All christen foike were fled from that countrie
Through paynems that conquered all about,
The plagues of the north by land and see,
To Wales fled the Christianyte,
Of olde Bretons dwelling in that Ile,
There was her refute for the mean while."

The witch Paganism then was an inmate of the strong castle, and the worm or oppressor occupied the *Heugh* or height. But chivalry and Christianity, with a due portion of gramercy, were coming, in the person of the valiant Childe, to destroy the serpent force, together with the old woman paganism, and to release the imprisoned maiden, the genius of the land, and thus restore liberty of person and conscience.

The precise time of these marvellous events is unknown, as there are no historical data on which to rest a settled opinion. The Saxons invited by the Northumbrians may be represented by Childe Wynd, or it may have been after the Danes had deluged the country, but before their conquest, in which case their encamped army was the worm. Or the subject-matter of the exploit may have reference to an earlier period, when the painted children of the north, wandering in wild freedom, were wont to disturb the quiet province of Valentia Cæsaris, which the Romans made and civilized. The Legend in all probability belongs to a much more recent era, for the obscure and figurative kept possession of ballad poetry to a very late date, and the poets were fond of inventing marvellous fictions of dragons, monsters, giants, witches, and enchanters.

It is enough to shew that a serpent, a snake, or a worm, is the favourite poetical personification of cruelty and oppression. It generally refers to camps,

which were often circular or inclined to the coiled form; and whenever a serpent or a worm appears in topography, there will probably be found one of these camps. It is so at Spindleston Heugh; and may not the vermicular traces around the base of the Worm Hill, at Lambton, have been the remains of some entrenchments? Looking fancifully at the remaining dykes now grown green, we may say that the green serpent to this hour coils her snaky folds round the several craggy eminences of Spindleston. This conjecture indicates the *Worm* to be the camp of an invading power;—that *Laidley* means loathsome;—that *Heugh* is height;—and that a triumphant witch or sorceress often indicates the temporary supremacy of a false religion. The lady is a simple representation of faith or freedom; and *Childe* is the earliest word in our language for knight or hero. With these explanations, this popular romance is sufficiently obvious and intelligible.

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